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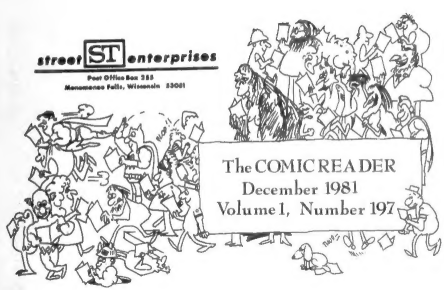

The COMIC READER
December 1981
Volume I, Number 197

OUR COVERS: Paul Abrams did a fine job on the Huntress for the front cover, while Fred Hembeck and Bill Anderson render a famous scene for us from JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #21. Both covers are © 1981, DC Comics Inc.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DC News 3
Marvel News 5
Big Screen Small Screen 6
Media Review: Saturday AM TV... 8
A Comic Reader 13
Archie Coming Comics 14
Captain Kentucky..... 15,18,32,34
Dick Duck, Duck Dick 16
Bullet Crow, Fowl of Fortune 17
Superman 19
The Seekers 21
Paul Temple 27
Pacific Coming Comic 31
Pocket Checklist 31
Kitchen Sink Coming Comic 31
Cel Break 33
Obituary: Wallace Wood 36
Warren Coming Comics 36
Comics Extras 36
Comics History: Tower Comics ... 37
Charlton Coming Comics 46
Et Al 46
TCR Top 100 Comic Books 47
Fandom Confidential 48
TCR Trivia Contest Results 49
European Comics 53
Marvel Coming Comics 53
DC Coming Comics 58

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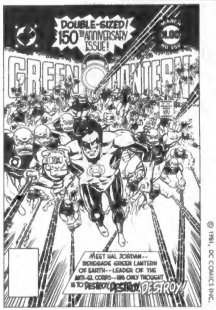
Above are samples of Pat Broderick's pencils from a couple of pages of the first issue of THE FURY OF FIRESTORM.

DC News

Time to stop the petitions, letter-bombs and assorted brickbats -- DC has brought ADVENTURE COMICS back to the land of the living. However, you won't be able to put it in order with the rest of your comics run of ADVENTURE, as the new title as of #491 is THE ADVENTURE COMICS DIGEST. It will replace DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST on the schedule as of the September issue, with the latter's last issue #24. So look for ADVENTURE to return, albeit in a new form, come June. It will be slightly different from its digest predecessor, however, in that it will contain new material along with the reprints on a regular basis. Carl Gafford and Dick Giordano will edit.

The official title for the second-go-around for Firestorm is THE FURY OF FIRESTORM. In the first issue Firestorm battles an American Indian taken over by the spirit of his grandfather, a Shaman. The Indian is called the Black Bison.

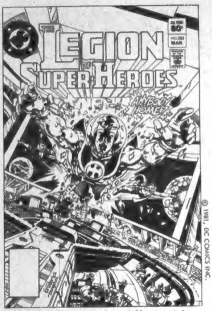
Two of the new books have been revealed. The first will debut in June and is called GEM WORLD, a new


DOUBLE-SIZED!
150TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!
GREEN LANTERN
MEET HAL JORDAN, BERSERKING GREEN LANTERN OF EARTH--LEADER OF THE MIGHTY CORPS--HIS ONLY THOUGHT IS TO DESTROY PLANET QWARD!
DC COMICS INC.

fantasy/sword and sorcery title about a world whose civilizations are based on different gemstones. Dan Mishkin and Gary Cohn are the creator/writers, Ernie Colon is the artist, and Dave Manak is the editor.

The second new title is also a fantasy book. It's called PANDORA PAN, and it begins with the October issue, on sale in July. Len Wein created and will write it, Ross Andru is the penciller, and Karen Berger is the editor. Pandora Pan is the assistant of an archaeologist who unwittingly opens Pandora's Box and spends the rest of her time trying to retrieve the evil she has unleashed by doing so.

And continuing the mini-series cycle will be TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS, a four-issue run including solo stories of Cyborg, Raven, the Changeling and Starfire set before the formation of the new Teen Titans group. Marv Wolfman and George Perez will



write and draw, with a different inker on each issue. It will go on sale in June for the first time.

CAMELOT 3000 (the title of which is still tentative), the twelve issue mini-series by Mike Barr and Brian Bolland, is scheduled to appear in May (cover-dated August) and is edited by Len Wein. The 3000 of the title refers to the year, and Camelot refers to the fact that the

A look at the presentation art that Tom Yeates did to earn the job of artist on the upcoming THE SAGA OF SWAMP THING.

series is about a team of science-fiction knights of the Round Table, led by the original King Arthur.

Some staff changes have been made with Nick Cuti joining DC as assistant to the president (the president being Joe Orlando), with administrative, production, correction and artwork duties under his purview. Also, Adrienne Roy and Tony Tollin have left their staff positions to go free-lance, though their coloring duties will remain nearly the same.

THE BEST OF DC schedule has been announced for issues #28-32. The subjects will be: #28 - Warlord and other sword and sorcery characters, including the Viking Prince and Silent Knight; edited by Laurie Sutton; #29 - Stories with a patriotic theme (out in July) featuring various heroes; edited by Nelson Bridwell; #30 - Detective Comics, with two BATMAN stories and the remainder other detectives; edited by Len Wein; #31 - All-Star Western; edited by Wein; #32 - Superman and other super-men he has met; edited by Julius Schwartz.

The Martian Manhunter, as mentioned last time, will be returning to the ranks of the JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, following a story in which the Martians return to their home planet only to discover Earth bases there, creating a war between Mars and Earth. Also, the Royal Flush Gang will make their reappearance in JLA #203-204.

The Teen Titans make a guest-appearance in ACTION COMICS #532, out in March.

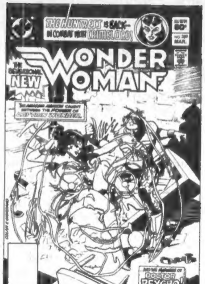
Marv Wolfman has left the writing post on GREEN LANTERN, with Mike Barr replacing him as of #154. Joe Staton is leaving the book as well, with no permanent replacement for him yet decided.

DC has dropped back down to 25 pages as of the April issues.

The German licensee of DC material has contracted with DC for some original material. The first story is a 46-pager called "The Startling Secret of Superman-Red and Superman-Blue" (not an imaginary story) featuring Superman vs. Lex Luthor and Terra-Man, featuring the return of red kryptonite which splits Superman into two. The story was plotted by Bob Rozakis and scripted by Paul Kupperberg and drawn by Adrian Gonzales and inked by Vince Colletta. It will be published in Germany and a part of the print run will be printed in English for distribution in England and the United States via direct sales. The cardboard-cover comic album will feature a cover painting pencilled by Gonzales and painted by Joe Orlando, and will cost $1.95. The second album will be Superman in "The Conqueror From the Past" by Rozakis, Kupperberg, Curt Swan and Colletta, but this story may be used in the U.S. as two issues of SUPERMAN instead, meaning the album will appear only in German. Further material is being considered, though nothing has been definitely decided at this time. A new eight-page SUGAR AND SPIKE story by Sheldon Mayer has been done and used in some German comic or another.

Atari is a subsidiary of Warner Communications (you may have noticed their slick-paper inserts in recent DC Comics) and are working on DC in two separate areas: DC is working with Atari in creating new adventure game cartridges; and Atari is working with DC on doing some comic-book tie-ins. Details are promised in the future.

The Wonder Woman Foundation, outlined in TCR #195, will hold their first Awards Banquet in November of next year, following a year's selection of worthy recipients of grants to remarkable individual women over forty. Also included in the Foundation agenda are "A Celebration of Women In Film," co-sponsored with the American Film Institute/Women's Projects and the Los Angeles Women in Film Foundation; a "Salute to Wonder Woman" exhibit at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.; a Leadership and History Conference co-sponsored with the Girl Scouts of America; a sports awards program co-sponsored with the Girls Clubs of America; and a national competetive sports event called "The



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Wonder Woman Foundation Decathalon Games."

The members of the WW Foundation Board have also been announced. They are: Peter A. Bonnani, Vice President and Group Publisher of WOMAN'S DAY Magazine; David Brown, of Zanuck/Brown Inc. Production Company; Judy Collins, singer, writer, film-director; Coy Eklund, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Equitable Life Assurance of the U.S.; Arthur Fleming, chairman of U.S. Committee on Civil Rights and Deputy Chairman of the White House Conference on Aging; Emanel Gerard, Office of the President, Warner Communications Inc.; LaDonna Harris, Executive Director/President of Americans for Indian Opportunity; Andrew Heiskell, Chairman of New York Public Library; Koryne Horbal, Executive Director, Wonder Woman Foundation; Jenette Kahn, President and Publisher, DC Comics Inc.; Joan B. Kennedy; Linda Lavin, star of ALICE; Eleanor Holmes Norton, Former chair, NYC Commission on Human Rights; Eleanor Riger, ABC Network Sports Producer; Geraldine Rhoads, Editor-In-Chief, WOMEN'S DAY Magazine; Jill Ruckelshaus, Founder, National Women's Political Caucus; William Samoff, Chairman, Warner Publishing Inc.; Donna Shalala, President, Hunter College; Donn R. Marston, son of William Marston and Staff Counsel, Machinery and Allied Products Institute; Roger R. Smith, Vice-President, Corporate Affairs at Warner Communications Inc.; Jean Stapleton, star of ALL IN THE FAMILY; Margery Tabankin, Executive Director, the Arca Foundation; Donna de Varona, commentator, NBC Sports; Carmen Delgado Votaw, U.S. Principal Delegate and Member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-American Commission of Women for 1980-82.

Marvel News

G.I. JOE #1 has been delayed until March. The first issue has a cover price of $1.50 and is by Larry Hama, Herb Trimpe and Bob McLeod. The plot involves G.I. Joe and his action team versus the sinister forces of Cobra. It will be the first comic book featuring one character to be specifically advertised on national television. (The specificity is necessary because ABC advertised the AMERICA'S BEST TV COMICS comic on national television in 1967, and Dell Comics ran national advertising in 1961.)

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The MIGHTY MARVEL CONTEST OF HEROES Mini-Series #1 goes on sale in March as well. This is the three-issue serialization of what was once a treasury story about the non-existent (for the U.S. at least) 1980 Summer Olympics and the meeting of every known Marvel Comics super-hero plus some newly created ones. It's by Bill Mantlo, John Romita Jr. and Pablo Marcos.

ALSO for March is the first in the MARVEL TITAN SCIENCE SERIES. Each issue presents a current scientific theory by a recognized scientist in the appropriate field in a 32-page comic format. There will be no ads and it's scheduled to be a bi-monthly. #1 is called "The Cosmic Egg," an overview of the current theories of the origin of the universe (clever eh? An origin issue!), written by Dr. Stan Stumbles (an astrophysicist) and drawn by Steve Bissette (an astropenciller). This is one time when a Marvel comic will be scientifically accurate.

The MARVEL PAPERBACK SERIES began with the reprint of THE EMPIRE

STRIKES BACK last year (we think), and we're not sure what #2 was, but #3 will be out in January and will feature STAR TREK reprints; #4 will feature THE INCREDIBLE HULK reprints; we're not certain of the contents of #5; and #6 will star (ta-taal) THE X-MEN. #6 should be the one which excites the most people as it will contain reprints of GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #1 plus "Psi-War" from X-MEN #117. These books cost $2.50 and are in full-color, in the style of the earlier books done by Pocket Books.

The DENNIS THE MENACE digest is actually two different digests every other month (both out together, not in alternation). DENNIS THE MENACE DIGEST #1 and THE VERY BEST OF DENNIS THE MENACE #1 will both be out in January.

Al Milgrom has taken over the editorship of STAR WARS. (I'm not too ashamed to admit that I've lost track of whom he's taking it over from.)

Since his last book, SAVAGE SHE-HULK, has gone to behemoth heaven, Mike Vosburg has been assigned the art chores on the new TEAM AMERICA book. No inker has yet been selected.

The famous "Angel Dust" story which was dropped by the powers-that-be at Marvel when the Comics Code objected to too many aspects of the storyline, has finally been scheduled to appear, right where it was supposed to to begin with -- in DAREDEVIL. #183 is the issue.

Marvel will be moving their offices one-and-a-half blocks from their current building to one on Park Avenue. There's every reason to believe that this won't cause full-scale catastrophe to hit the production line, and that everything will come out as usual.

The scuttlebut is that following Jim Starlin's execution of the current Captain Marvel, a new character bearing the same name will appear in a future issue of THE AVENGERS. And to continue the resurrection, a new character called Miss Marvel is on the drawing boards, who will differ from her predecessor in one obvious aspect: she'll be black. (If you'll forgive a bit of editorializing, it seems obvious that this move is being done more as a means to block DC's full-scale exploitation of the original Captain by retaining rights to the name than any sense of nostalgia or identification with the name on Marvel's part. If the "Marvel" part of the name was so important, why was Marvel Man's name changed to Quasar?)

Roy Thomas and Craig Russell are working on a new ELRIC story for EPIC ILLUSTRATED. Other contributors will include Berni Wrightson, who'll do a story, Chris Claremont and John Bolton with a story set in medieval times, John Romita Jr. with a light pastoral story, Frank Brunner, who's doing a cover, and Craig Russell by himself, also doing a cover. #11 will be the first issue to cost $2.50, and it contains an adaptation of Harlan Ellison's "Run For the Stars" by Ken Steacy.

Jack C. Harris is doing a number of stories for Marvel, including a Hulk/Human Torch story for MARVEL TEAM-UP and another MOON KNIGHT back-up story. Both are being drawn by Steve Ditko.

WHAT IF? #34 will be an all-humor issue (the first, we hasten to add).

BIZARRE ADVENTURES #31 is headlined an "AFTER THE VIOLENCE STOPS" issue featuring a Frank Miller story, two Larry Hama funny-animal stories, "Kip and Muffy and Dr. Death" by Hama himself, and "Rupert Rabbit" by Mark Armstrong, plus a new Hangman story by Mark Gruenwald and Bill Siekiewicz.

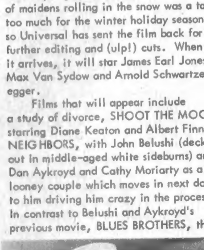
Some upcoming Marvel team-ups for MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE include: Thing and Ant-Man, Thing and the Human Torch, Thing and She-Hulk, Thing and Machine Man, a two-parter with Thing and Spider-Woman, and an issue with a couple members of the (ta-taal) X-Men.

Big Screen Small Screen

By Joel Thingvall

NEW MOVIE SEASON: The Christmas season will bring few jollies to the fantasy lover as the major releases include ten dramas. The long-awaited opening of everyone's favorite barbarian, CONAN, has been pushed back to the springtime. Seems that the heads of maidens rolling in the snow was a tad too much for the winter holiday season so Universal has sent the film back for further editing and (ulp!) cuts. When it arrives, it will star James Earl Jones, Max Van Sydow and Arnold Schwartzenegger.

Films that will appear include a study of divorce, SHOOT THE MOON, starring Diane Keaton and Albert Finney; NEIGHBORS, with John Belushi (decked out in middle-aged white sideburns) and Dan Aykroyd and Cathy Moriarty as a looney couple which moves in next door to him driving him crazy in the process. In contrast to Belushi and Aykroyd's previous movie, BLUES BROTHERS, th



one won't take too long to turn a profit as it only cost $10 million; GHOST STORY, which features such older ge

as Fred Astaire, the late Melvyn Douglas and John Houseman, and is about an unexpected murder; ROLL OVER with Jane Fonda and Kris Kristofferson, the latter a soldier of fortune; Steve Martin and Bernadette Peters in PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, an R-rated musical with very little Martin-type comedy; Peters again with Andy Kaufman this time in HEART-BEEPS, a movie about a love-affair between robots (the make-up in the advance shots is remarkable; what I look forward to are the precision movements); Chevy Chase as an air controller in MODERN PROBLEMS; possibly the long-in-production, $30 million Warren Beatty film REDS, which stars Beatty, Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton again; RAGTIME with James Cagney; Burt Reynolds as a detective on the trail of an (ahem) Atlanta killer in SHARKEY'S MACHINE, which should do very well; and the rerelease of Disney's CINDERELLA.

NEW MAGAZINE: It's taken a couple years of tinkering, but the folks at ESQUIRE Magazine now feel they can release their new publication, titled MOVIEGOER, this December. It will be distributed free through various theatre chains. The magazine will ignore the academic approach common to such titles as AMERICAN FILM and FILM COMMENT and instead cover movies as a leisure activity enjoyed -- sometimes passionately -- by millions. "This will be a magazine of the movie-going experience," said publisher Christopher Whittle, explaining that it will contain a mix of in-depth features on personalities and new movies and smaller departments that will keep interested readers updated on the film industry. It should have a circulation of one million.

GOSSIP: Any rumor to the fact that FRIDAYS' Mark Blankfield will star in a remake of DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE? No -- just truth. It'll tend toward the adult audience more than previous versions, and will star Bess Armstrong as the femme lead...Woody Allen's new film is SUMMER NIGHTS (Bergman title influence?), starring Jose Ferrer, Tony Roberts and actresses Mary Steenburgen, Julie Hagerty and Mia Farrow... STAR TREK II -- THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY is the title of the new Enterprise voyage, with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy and presumably the rest of the cast (though James Doohan has recently been in the hospital), with Ricardo Montalban reprising the role of genetically created superman he had on a television episode. Supposedly (according to the TV show, ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT) two different endings will be filmed, one which includes Spock's death. However the show (which seems to have a very short memory) also reported that Nimoy had called them denying categorically that the rumor of Spock's death in the film had any validity. I guess we'll have to wait and see.

QUEST STAR: William (Bill G.) Wilson used to publish comic fanzines which featured the black-and-white cartoon studies of Steve Ditko. He's come quite a way since those limited-edition magazines catering to a straight comic-book audience. Teaming with Robert Michelucci, and corraling writers C.J. Henderson, Carl Macek, Ron Frenz, Andrew Sands and James Warhola, Wilson has created an elegant magazine covering the spectrum of subjects in science fiction, fantasy, graphics, horror and adventure. The next issue (#14) is due to have a Richard Corben cover. You get a comic book adventure, some fiction, interviews, plenty of news and lots of opinion. You can subscribe for $18.00 for nine issues (one year) by writing to: MW Communications, Dept. TCR, 247 Fort Pitt Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

WILLIAM SHATNER: He's the man who fought Klingons, made impassioned speeches to alien creatures, served as a combination father figure and leader to his crew, and worried about such matters as a rapidly-multiplying Tribble population. Shatner enjoys talking about STAR TREK, the TV series whose 70 episodes mixed quasi-philosophical insight and science-fiction adventure with a space-age, fantasy ethic: never tamper with an alien culture. For an actor, such close identification with a character (especially one that becomes a cult figure) is always a mixed blessing.

"It never really dies," says Shatner. "There was a great deal of revival when the last movie came out. Of course, the Trekkies have never been known to lay low in their enthusiasm over the past decade." And there's more excitement on the horizon. "There's a story and a director for the sequel. I've contracted to do the film, and so has Leonard. I'm totally aware of the potential for type-casting that I face by constantly coming back to STAR TREK. But I'm also aware that STAR TREK is part of our culture. It was a wonderful television series and is

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wonderful movie entertainment."

Shatner is one of those actors whose identification with a single role tends to overshadow the rest of his work. He is a serious man whose career dates back to his college days. He has played as many parts as the Enterprise has logged space miles. He's done Shakespeare, appeared on Broadway in THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG and A SHOT IN THE DARK and appeared in such movies as THE BROTHERS KARAMOZOV, JUDGMENT AT NUREMBURG and THE INTRUDERS. He's turned in a gripping performance in the PBS production of THE ANDERSONVILLE TRIAL, and has provided enough TV fare to give us the equivalent of several seasons of non-stop Shatner viewing if we were so inclined. "All of television is pretty mediocre with marvelous, soaring exceptions. TV is such a conglomerate operation. A TV movie goes through so many hands. So many incompetent people are in a position to offer an opinion and have it stick."

Still, Shatner doesn't play the artistic malcontent, the dedicated Bohemian hiding behind pristine notions about the purity of his art. Mostly he seems concerned about pushing his own capabilities to new limits, no matter what medium. "It goes along with the syndrome I've noticed. The more popular I become, the more intense I feel about being perfect or good -- entertaining, I suppose. It becomes a much larger responsibility to headline a show than to be a part of the show. That gnaws at me. I used to sail into things without thinking about such things. The theatre is an absolute necessity for me. Not only for my enjoyment, but it's a form of discipline I absolutely have to have--that plus the fact that it sharpens my editorial sense, which an actor uses when he's in front of the camera and there's no audience reaction.

"I never want to lose my sense of

enthusiasm. I strive to retain a boyish quality, to keep that sparkle in my eyes, to give that occasional hint of mischievousness." Shatner is an outdoor activist -- he swims, cycles, glides, scuba-dives, lifts weights, skis and runs, having reportedly broken the fourteen mile barrier. "I'm still in that adolescent behavior pattern of not admitting that there isn't anything that I can't do that I did twenty years ago. As far as I'm concerned, I'm still that age."

INFORMATION: Universal Studios and Walt Disney Productions brought suit against Sony Corporation of America, a half-dozen retail outlets, a Betamax owner and a public relations firm. The plaintiffs claimed copyright infringement was committed when home video recorders were used to tape shows off the television. This past month a federal appeals court ruled that millions of Americans were violating copyright laws when they use the machines to tape. Under the ruling the makers of the machines could be required to pay royalties to television program producers or discontinue the manufacture of recorders.

Sales of the recorders topped the one-million mark in 1980, and are expected to top 1.2 million for the current year. Sony says the ruling will be appealed, stating that the final decision will be made by the U.S. Supreme Court. The major discussion focuses on the "personal use" of recorders by people. A survey of 2000 machine owners published in the September issue of Mart Magazine found that only 48.4 percent of the owners of VCRs use them to record shows while they are asleep or away from their dwellings. Which means, by inference, that 51.6 of them are building home libraries.

This also reopens the case of photocopying materials in libraries and businesses and will cause guidelines that currently allow copyrighted printed material to be reproduced for "scholarly" and classroom use to be redefined, possibly through legislation which could also cover the videotaping of copyrighted material.

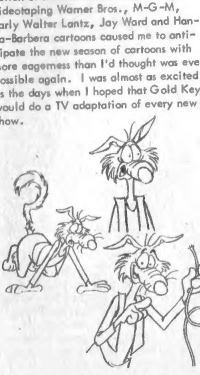
All the other VCR manufacturers have since been brought into the suit by the plaintiffs, and it appears that the Supreme Court decision will be sweeping. In the meantime, look for prices to rise as soon as the decision is made, as it is likely that royalties will be added to the price of the VCR and the cassettes themselves.

THE TUBE: CBS has paid a reported $25 million for three showings of STAR WARS, sold to free TV before cable by Universal, despite the objections of George Lucas, who has no control over the disposition of the goldmine film. Lucasfilm feels that there are millions more to be garnered

through future theatrical reissues on a regular basis and that the whole thing is bad business -- saying that they will not sell rights to either THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK or the upcoming REVENGE OF THE JEDI. The showing of STAR WARS should set VCRs around the country to humming -- but the experience will be a lot less impressive on the small screen...Lovers of tradition will be saddened to learn that the theme song of the new BRET MAVERICK will not be the old theme from the original series, but will be a new one courtesy of Waylon Jennings. It will probably be different from DUKES OF HAZZARD, though you never can tell...MAGGIE and NASHVILLE PALACE are the first cancellations of the season, though MAGGIE may return in January in a new timeslot. ABC and CBS have already ordered some new series for the mid-season. ABC has ordered a new version of THE ODD COUPLE, uncast at this point; JOANIE/CHACHI, a HAPPY DAYS spin-off; CHEERS, a comedy from Glen and Les Charles, late of the BOB NEWHART SHOW; and, most promising, POLICE SQUAD, a comedy starring Leslie Nielsen produced by AIRPLANE writer-directors David and Jerry Zucker and Jim Abrahams. CBS has new Suzanne Somers and Sally Struthers sitcoms, CAGNEY AND LACEY (a cop show starring Loretta Swit and Tyne Daly), the British series Q.E.D., and sitcoms REPORT TO MURPHY, MAKING THE GRADE and BAKER'S DOZEN.

debuted and I guessed that it would be enough impetus to make me record and watch the output of the three networks and make some kind of value judgment. In retrospect it's probably good that I didn't do it then, as I might not have had the patience to watch this season. It would've been my loss.

I'd last watched Saturday morning cartoons in 1968-69. It was my last year of high school, and being sixteen I had become convinced that cartoons (as well as comic books) were only suitable for consumption if the content were slanted toward "adult" consumption. Never mind that most of what I had enjoyed in cartoons and comics previously might be classified as "juvenile" material. I was too conscious of the appearance of someone as adult as me reading or watching children's material, and felt I had to justify myself to adults. I've recounted my "awakening" in these pages before; my rekindling of interest in both cartoons and funny-animal comics, and the realization that well-written juvenile-slanted entertainment can be far more satisfying to an adult than poorly wrought, "adult"-oriented fare, especially if you heed only your own feelings when experiencing it. The cultivation of interest in cartoons through videotaping Warner Bros., M-G-M, early Walter Lantz, Jay Ward and Hanna-Barbera cartoons caused me to anticipate the new season of cartoons with more eagerness than I'd thought was eve possible again. I was almost as excited as the days when I hoped that Gold Key would do a TV adaptation of every new show.

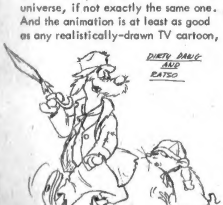


Media Review

By Rona Blabbit

I think it was two years ago I first promised to review Saturday morning TV's then-current season. As I recall, the new FANTASTIC FOUR show (the one with Herbie the robot) had just

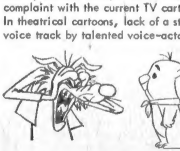
The show which was obviously of most interest to anybody interested in comics had to be SPIDER-MAN AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS (or "SPIDER-FRIENDS," as it was originally planned as). As the first bona-fide Marvel Productions series, it would serve as an indicator as to whether Marvel could perfonn the same kind of magic that they'd accomplished on the printed page. If the quality of this show IS any indication we should look forward to future Marvel Productions. Excepting what was done to the two established characters who star (Spider-Man and Iceman; the former now lives in a big house with Bobby Drake and Aunt May; the latter gives no indication of his X-Men origins) the characters who have guest-starred thus far have been very close to their comic book personae. The stories themselves are the same mixture of melodrama and humor (if rather light on character) we've come to expect from the fill-in comic book scripters, and definitely within the same kind of universe, if not exactly the same one. And the animation is at least as good as any realistically-drawn TV cartoon,



possibly better. The animation is fluid and the "walk-lines" are varied enough to keep things from becoming boring (i.e. the characters move dimensionally rather than merely from left to right or right to left on an invisible line). Only the backgrounds can be faulted, as some are lacking in detail, and others could use more variance in coloring. But within the limitations of television animation and the network policies which insist on the duplication of ABC's SUPER FRIENDS format with an artificial team which violates the backgrounds for the two already existent characters, I'm more than satisfied, even if I would have sought better voice matches for most of the characters. (Iceman's voice is particularly grating.)

Which brings me to the criteria I use when judging TV's animated fare.

Too many critics have looked at it from an unfair standpoint: how it compares with full animation done for theatrical release. You don't judge the short story by the merits of the novel; you don't compare the comic strip with the comic book; you don't criticize PEANUTS because the art isn't as three-dimensional as SHOE's. Each is done with different means for different purposes, and such should be the thing kept in mind with TV animation. What is a fair criticism, though, is comparing past and present TV animation. And by this criterion, I do have some complaint with the current TV cartoons. In theatrical cartoons, lack of a strong voice track by talented voice-actors



can be overcome if the animation is elaborate or beautiful enough to make up for the lacking. Such is rarely the case with TV animation, and in some cases (the Jay Ward cartoons come to mind) it comprises 75% or more of the enjoyment derived from a series. Obviously, it isn't going to matter how well a series is written if the people reading the lines are messing up. So selection and casting of these continuing characters is as important as choosing leads in any TV series -- which makes the fact that the networks have taken this selection almost entirely out of the studios' hands particularly appalling -- especially in light of the fact that so many cartoons today are only unwatchable because of the voices chosen for the lead characters.

SHAZAM! (a half-hour segment of the KID SUPER POWER HOUR) is a case in point. The animation isn't particularly better or worse than every Filmation show since 1966's NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN, although the character designs (based on the C.C. Beck concepts) are actually closer to the Fawcett comics than DC has gotten, using the old characters and villains liberally looking much the same

as they did originally. It's close to being perfect (NBC seems to insist that all their super-characters live together in the same house; here it's Billy, Freddy and Mary living in a house with Tawky Tawny and Uncle Dudley), if not for the voices. Barry Gordon is a very funny actor whose work on the NEW DICK VAN DYKE SHOW and GOOD TIME HARRY (if not on FISH) I enjoyed; he's perfect as the voice of the Quik Rabbit in commercials. But as the voice of Freddy Freeman/Captain Marvel Jr., he is totally inappropriate, especially considering that Captain Marvel Jr. was always more sober and realistically portrayed than the other Marvels. Although some fine voice actors have done children's voices quite well (and there are many), I think this is one case where children's voices done by children would have worked to the show's advantage. What made JONNY QUEST appealing to me was that Jonny and Hadji had little-boy voices, hence making them believable as kids. SHAZAM! isn't a comedy, and adult voices aren't as effective.

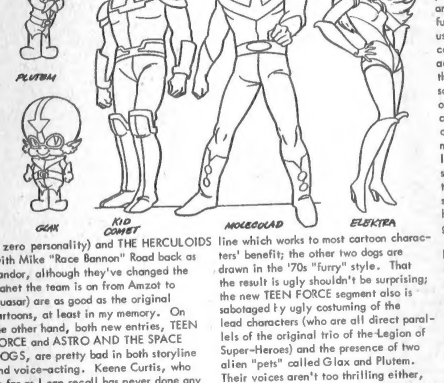
Otherwise, I recommend those comics fans who enjoy stories that are not written in the "Oh My God!" school of writing. (But do yourself a big favor and avoid watching the HERO HIGH segments, both live and cartoon, which give new meaning to the words "witless" and "obnoxious.")

The voice affliction also plagues SPACE STARS. The series, originally planned to air last season but delayed by the actors' strike, shows what can be done if the studios get a large enough deadline: the art is as good as H-B had been in the late sixties. Both SPACE GHOST (with Gary Owens back as the title character, and the addition of a sarcastic bent to Space Ghost's former-

Don Messick doing the voice, he sounds nothing like the original version, which was endearing simply BECAUSE of that old voice. With Astro serving Scooby Doo-duty to two other dogs of the "Clue Club" variety, the group is rounded out with a character called Space Ace, who is not only unappealing from a visual standpoint -- he's afflicted with a smart-alec voice which I dislike a lot. (I don't know who this is -- Len Weinrib? -- but I've a feeling he also does the voices of Crazy Claws and Dirty Dawg on KWICKY KOALA). The other flaw here is that the character designs don't fit together. Astro is designed in the old '60s simplicity/economy of-

considering that Ruby Spears was responsible for PLASTIC MAN AND FRIENDS. I can't say the concept is entirely original, as it's derived from six or seven sources (MIGHTY SAMSON, STAR WARS, KAMANDI, and others), and I generally become bored quickly when reading or viewing barbarian stories or anything in which the whole point of the character is how much he can beat on other characters with his weapons (especially big ugly mutated things), but there's enough actual thinking go on in the scripts that it is entertaining on more than an occasional basis. (Obviously, many found it to be so last season, as it was #1 in the ratings.)

However, and you can call me eccentric if you want, I prefer the GOLDIE GOLD AND ACTION JACK segment to THUNDARR. Goldie is the richest girl in America (the fact that the show preceding this one is RICHIE RICH is probably NOT a coincidence) and she and Action Jack are otherwise normal, fun-loving human beings who have to use their wits, physical skills and Goldie's considerable wealth to experience their adventures. It's really rather goofy, in the patented Jack Kirby way, and in some ways reminds me of Challengers of the Unknown and early Fantastic Four crossed with Mr. Miracle. And the concept, for a comic-booky show, is more original than usual. (One thing I can't figure out, though, is if Goldie's supposed to be of a different nationality than Action Jack; in the episodes I've seen, her skin is somewhat grayer than his. Maybe the ink and paint department got their bottles mixed up.)



ly zero personality) and THE HERCULOIDS (with Mike "Race Bannon" Road back as Zandor, although they've changed the planet the team is on from Amzot to Quasar) are as good as the original cartoons, at least in my memory. On the other hand, both new entries, TEEN FORCE and ASTRO AND THE SPACE DOGS, are pretty bad in both storyline and voice-acting. Keene Curtis, who as far as I can recall has never done any cartoon voices, is given the weighty chore of narrating all the segments and doing most of the villain voices, a task he isn't especially up to doing, his voice talent (as apart from his acting talent) not being nearly versatile enough. Most detrimental, though, is the ASTRO AND THE SPACE DOGS segment. Putting aside the inappropriate juxtaposition of the talking dogs into what is otherwise a realistic-fantasy show, the most jarring part of this cartoon are the voices. Astro has been taken nearly intact from THE JETSONS and plunked into this, but for reasons unknown (other than the limitations inherent in the original as far as plot advancement through dialogue goes) Astro's original voice, with its "R" dominated pronunciation ("Rat's Rawright Rorge!") has been changed to normal speech. Although it is evidently still

SUPERFRIENDS, unfortunately, hasn't changed. The animation and art can be charitably termed "uninspired" and the usage of the DC characters is often extremely uncharacteristic, especially dealing with the non-regulars such as Green Lantern, whose powering is never used quite right. No need getting up early to watch; seek out the '60s Filmation cartoons for something more watchable.

Speaking of Filmation, they're responsible for the final adventure show of the season, the ZORRO/LONE RANGER/TARZAN hour. The ZORRO segments are new, and as uninspired in story as the LONE RANGER and TARZAN episodes. As I mentioned, the Filmation animation standard of design has changed not a whit since '66, looking for all the world as if each new show's character designs are merely tracings of previous seasons' shows changing small features for new characters. Henry Darrow (of HIGH CHAPARRAL fame) is Zorro, and does an acceptable job -- certainly less distracting than William Conrad's thunderous tones as the Lone Ranger. (Originally, Fernando Lamas was to be Zorro; that would have been very distracting.) Having never read the original stories, I can't tell how

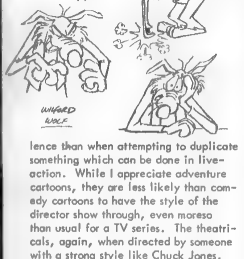
line which works to most cartoon characters' benefit; the other two dogs are drawn in the '70s "furry" style. That the result is ugly shouldn't be surprising; the new TEEN FORCE segment also is sabotaged by ugly costuming of the lead characters (who are all direct parallels of the original trio of the Legion of Super-Heroes) and the presence of two alien "pets" called Glax and Plutem. Their voices aren't too thrilling either, and when they ride through airless space on their space bikes, their hair flies out behind them. (Ahem.) The sixth cartoon (there are two SPACE GHOST segments) is a team-up of all the characters, and this only works when Gary Owens and Mike Road have the dominant speaking parts. So unless you were a stone SPACE GHOST/HERCULOIDS fan during the '60s, I suggest you skip this.

THUNDARR THE BARBARIAN continues, and because I didn't see many last year, I can't say whether there are new episodes being shown this season. In any case, probably due to the participation of so many comic book artists (including Jack Kirby), this series is quite attractively animated, especially

closely Disney adapted them in their '50s TV series, but Filmation's ZORRO resembles Disney's very closely, from Zorro's costume to the portrayal of the fat Mexican sergeant (who isn't called Garcia, but may as well be).

Why must nearly every one of these adventure shows use the swirling insignia for scene-changing, as originated on the old live-action BATMAN TV series? Is this another network-inflicted credo?

It may not surprise you to know that I am far more entertained by humorous cartoons than "realistic" ones, simply because I'm of the opinion that animation works better when it shows the exaggeration necessary in anything featuring talking animals or comic vio-

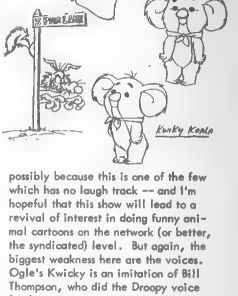


lence than when attempting to duplicate something which can be done in live-action. While I appreciate adventure cartoons, they are less likely than comedy cartoons to have the style of the director show through, even moreso than usual for a TV series. The theatricals, again, when directed by someone with a strong style like Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, Friz Freleng, or Bob Clampett, had a cohesive look throughout. Some TV cartoons have duplicated the feat, but they're far more likely to do so when the style is humorous rather than dramatic, as even such strong stylists as Alex Toth and Jack Kirby have failed to have their style carried out through a show's entirety due to TV's tag-team animation and homogenizing in-betweeners. Until this changes, I'll continue to feel dissatisfied; but I can look for style in the humorous stuff. This season, however, the pickings are slim.

I'll begin by saying that I've been unable to watch either the TROLLKINS or the SMURFS through an entire episode. The little I've seen was not impressive in dialogue or art, and in the case of the former, I'm more than a little offended by anything described (in the commercials) as "foot-jerkin' funny and knee-slappin' weird." That sounds too much like an epileptic fit. And since our local channel pre-empts BLACK STAR (which I'm told is also populated with little elf-like creatures) I will not venture a qualitative analysis of the various "weird races" shows.

Two other shows are pre-empted in Milwaukee: POPEYE and BULLWINKLE. Absence of the former is no loss -- Jack Mercer is nowhere near his prime any longer, the people doing the voices of Olive and Bluto are simply awful, and the art is rotten, capturing nothing of Segar, Sagendorf, or even Wildman (besides which I'm glad I'm spared the experience of seeing Popeye-as-Alley Oop and Olive-as-Beetle Bailey). The only saving grace for me was that this was the only show which utilized the considerable talents of Daws Butler, and then only as Wimpy/W.C. Fields. I'm told that BULLWINKLE features three episodes of the serial per show with a MR. PEABODY or FRACTURED FAIRY TALE rounding out the show; I'm especially mad that I can't see this.

That brings me to KWICKY KOALA. I'm taping these episodes to keep since this is the first new Hanna-Barbera show in a long time to revert to the old format of the early '60s shows (HUCK HOUND, YOGI BEAR, QUICK DRAW McGRAW) of three separate cartoons featuring different characters with bridging episodes between. Those cartoons which originally used this format were done by former employees of the great cartoon-short producers and written by veteran Warner Bros. storymen Warren Foster and Michael Maltese. For KWICKY, H-B had the benefit of veteran director Tex Avery as creator and storyboard man on at least 2/3 of the show's characters (plus the Bungle Brothers; I don't think he had anything to do with Dirty Dawg). The stars are also all funny animals, also something of a rarity in network shows made for TV. But there the similarities break down; although enjoyable, these are not as good. Though Kwicky, Wilford Wolf, Joey and George Bungle, Crazy Claws and supporting cast look Avery-esque, the designs are weakened by uncertain lines which change from pose to pose, H-B having long ago eschewed simplicity of outline for needlessly complicated design. Compare, for example, CRAZY CLAWS' Rawhide Clyde with his obvious inspiration, Yosemite Sam: Sam is far smoother, has fewer irregularities in the definition of his beard and eyebrows, and is hence easier to watch. Another weakness is in pupil-size: the smaller the pupil the less expressive, and all of the new characters have tiny dots inside intersecting ovals for eyes. The backgrounds are also a weakness: the ones used for the KWICKY cartoons are almost always yellow; the DIRTY DAWG cartoons have elaborately water-colored backgrounds over which the characters are difficult to "read." (And I wish someone in budget would okay the coloring of the whites of the human characters' eyes white instead of flesh!) The sparsity of comedy/funny animal shows in the past few years also shows, as some of the comedy timing and execution of gags fails simply because whoever was responsible (story director or animator) isn't as schooled in the comic technique as were the ex-Warner, M-G-M, Lantz and Famous employees who first worked at the company. Yet, I still find the writing (by a whole slew of different people; I've seen duplication of names by only a very few, including Bob Ogle, a former Avery collaborator who wrote some of the Chuck Jones TOM AND JERRYs and also contributes the voice of Kwicky Koala) to be funnier than normal for Saturday mornings,



possibly because this is one of the few which has no laugh track -- and I'm hopeful that this show will lead to a revival of interest in doing funny animal cartoons on the network (or better, the syndicated) level. But again, the biggest weakness here are the voices. Ogle's Kwicky is an imitation of Bill Thompson, who did the Droopy voice for Avery cartoons done for M-G-M (the format of which was occasionally similar to this small bear who zips from place to place at unbelievable speed). As Thompson imitations go (and there've been plenty, like Professor Gizmo/Dan Messick, Bill Scott's various minor characters for Jay Ward, et al.), it's about average. But why they chose a Paul Lynde imitation (voiced by John Stephenson) for Wilford Wolf is beyond me; Lynde's height of popularity is long gone, and besides, they had the REAL Lynde back in '69 doing the Mildew Wolf character on the IT'S THE WOLF cartoons. But I can live with both of those voices, and with Crazy Claws' Groucho Marx voice (which isn't very close, but it has its own rhythm and isn't offensive). But the other voices are all very disconcerting. The Ranger Dangerfield character is the worst: a Charles Nelson Reilly imitation? I think it's Danny Goldman (last seen on BUSTING LOOSE) doing it, which makes no sense; H-B has the REAL Reilly doing the Frankenstone voice over on NBC's FLINTSTONES series. And what's a guy with a NYC

accent (and fey to boot) doing as a forest ranger anyway? (To top it off, they've got Dangerfield interrupting the flow of each cartoon with an inauspicious nature lesson, although to be fair it isn't as obvious as the TENNESSEE TUXEDO lessons used to be). I'm not too bothered by the fact that Rawhide Clyde is a direct swipe of Yosemite Sam or that Sawtooth seems to be a direct steal from the old Quick Draw McGraw character Snuffles, or that George and Joey Bungle are another version of the Steinbeck OF MICE AND MEN characters Avery's done before as I am by the voices, none of which are particularly appealing. (The only one I can identify is Allan Melvin -- whose name is mispelled in the credits -- as Joey Bungle.) What does bother me is that the chosen voices for Dirty Dawg and Ratso are so bad. Dawg is a Howard Cosell impression nearly as nauseating as the original, and Ratso a poorly-done Dustin Hoffman. The whole point of this is that most of these voices were chosen after mass auditions by nearly every top voice man in the business. I know why Daws Butler did none (he was ill at the time), but surely, left to their own devices, Hanna-Barbera could have found someone who was better than these guys. Had this show come about as originally planned, as a syndicated program shown in the afternoon, they might have done the selection themselves. We'll never know. Still, funny animals have had bad press over the past fifteen years or so (why else does CAPTAIN CARROT say "Not Just Another Funny Animal Comic!"?), and perhaps if ratings are fair enough, the networks may be interested in bringing some new shows into the category.

That means, I hope, no more new versions of old shows; the newest version of TOM AND JERRY is a sorry argument for never reviving old theatrical cartoon characters as TV cartoon characters. The Hanna-Barbera TV TOM AND JERRYs were bad, as were the Gene Deitch theatricals, but these beat both of them for rotten art and no humor at all. The same goes for the recent MIGHTY MOUSE Filmation did, although there the original versions weren't that much better except perhaps in amount of animation.

However, Ruby-Spears seems to have begun to clean up their humor act after such winners as MIGHTY MAN AND YUKK. HEATHCLIFF is actually a cut above average on the humor level, and George Gately's comic panel style is adhered to pretty well. The strength, strangely, is due to Mel Blanc's voice for Heathcliff. Blanc has been a contributory factor in making most recent Warner Bros. attempts to recapture their former glory a bitter failure, but here he has no former work to compare to, and his voice sounds fine (as it does on the FLINTSTONES episodes; Barney Rubble was one of the few voices Blanc did equally well before and after his 1962 auto accident). The MARMADUKE cartoons do a similarly accurate job of transferring Brad Anderson's strip to cartoon form, although since the strip is about a pet dog and his family, less latitude exists when it comes to stories. It is better than last season's DING-BATS, however, which means, perhaps, that Ruby-Spears should stick to adaptations.

The two networks currently showing Warner Bros. fare are the two I tape regularly, which somewhat determines what I get to watch (since I work at night and sleep during the day), and both seem determined to keep interest high on their top-rated shows, the BUGS BUNNY/ROAD RUNNER SHOW and the DAFFY/SPEEDY SHOW. Each has new opening credits, the former merely a bad retracing of the fine opening from the old prime-time BUGS BUNNY SHOW, the latter somewhat better than the old credits (with much better music). The BUGS/ROAD RUNNER SHOW is otherwise unchanged, as they continue to show the same cartoons over in over in different combinations each week (wreaking havoc with my attempts to collect them, as they range from one I need out of nine per episode to six or seven). The DAFFY/SPEEDY SHOW, though, at least is keeping things interesting. They've used some of the recent-vintage shorts culled from their prime-time DAFFY DUCK specials (including the disappointing RETURN OF DUCK DODGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY), although they do have the unfortunate tendancy to show complete versions of the awful Daffy/Speedy cartoons made by DePatie-Freleng while editing two or three minutes from the middle cartoons from the early '50s so they can cram four into a half-hour show. The animation on the new segments isn't great, but why someone at the network doesn't cop to the idea that if the revived Warner studio was commissioned to do one or two new cartoons for each show per month, they'd not only be training the studio for fully-animated new specials, they'd be enlarging the package of cartoons to cause less repetition. There has to be some new training ground for the new crop of writers as well, because up until now, there've been no pretenders to the throne Maltese and Foster hold among Warner fans. I don't know what can be done about Blanc, who seems nearly incapable of the energy level necessary to make Bugs, Daffy or Porky live any more -- although one of the greatest problems would seem to be the fact that all the old cartoon soundtracks (up to 1963 or thereabouts) were recorded in the marvelous acoustics of the cavernous Warner Bros. studio. (I can pick out old Warner Bros. live-action movies simply by hearing the soundtrack; there's no mistaking it.) These days of transisters and computer recording have eliminated the sound of those studios nearly entirely, and someone should realize that and try to at least duplicate the cavernous sound artificially.

Which brings us to the other reason some of the voice tracks on these cartoons are not as good as they once were. In the old days of TV animation the soundtracks would be supervised by someone who understood the writing, like the story director or even the animation director (in theatricals, the director of the cartoon would be in charge of this, with the writer there to make sure the intonations and accents were followed as he wrote them). Nowadays there's one guy at most studios who's in charge of this, and he has nothing to do with any other aspect of the production. Alan Dinehart does it for Ruby-Spears and Marvel, and he does a much better job than the person who supervises all the H-B soundtracks. As proof, I offer the new FLINTSTONES show, already several years old, the SCOOBY DOO/RICHIE RICH cartoon and the LAVERNE AND SHIRLY and FONZ AND THE HAPPY DAYS GANG shows. The Flintstones is irreparably harmed by Alan Reed's absence and destruction of the original format with the intrusion of garbage segments like SHMOO and CAPTAIN CAVEMAN; SCOOBY still has Casey (AMERICA'S TOP 10/40) Kasem, the ugliest-sounding voice on American cartoons; and RICHIE RICH, otherwise okay, has a redesigned Richie who's at least one head too tall. And LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY and FONZ are examples of a trend in TV cartoons which I hope goes away forever, one which shows a complete misunderstanding of the value of a cartoon. Neither satirizes the live-action show it is based upon; i

stead they are completely wrong-headed formats which use the personalities and voices of well-known characters for no reason at all except they came pre-sold to the audience. Fonz, Rich and Ralph (the latter not even on the nighttime HAPPY DAYS anymore) travel through time with a machine and one of those cutesy-poo aliens; Laverne and Shirley are in the army and have a talking pig as a pal (they too were in outer space in the only one I watched). I have no objection to the voices here; how could I as they're exactly the same as the characters they're based on? (I usually object strongly to the usage of a voice actor who can ONLY do his own voice, thus meaning that the impression one is supposed to get is that of the human actor rather than the cartoon character, vis-a-vis any modern Disney feature, GAY PURR-EE, CHARLOTTE'S WEB, HEIDI'S SONG, etc. There are exceptions, of course; Hans Conreid can do as many voices in his own voice as he wants, as far as I'm concerned.) In the case of these two shows, however, the characters are ruined by destroying the base of their personalities since their world has been changed to unrecognizability. To retain the characters' integrity, the original format must be used -- and what's the point of that if the original still exists? These kind of shows (JEANNIE, MY FAVORITE MARTIANS, PATRIDGE FAMILY 2020, BRADY KIDS, GILLIGAN'S ISLAND) never work because except for the few leads of the original show that were affordable, all the other characters are voice actors, doing CARTOON voices. Next to the normal speaking voices of Ron Howard or Cindy Williams, they are particularly grating. The only time there is a good reason for this kind of thing is when the original doesn't exist any longer, and all the original voices were used. Only the animated STAR TREK worked by these conditions -- and then only because the original was thought to be long gone.

The problems the studios have are plenty even before they begin production: ridiculously short deadlines, low budgets, many restrictions as to content and technique. I sympathize, but these are the rules -- and I applaud when they are circumvented and we come up with something worthwhile to watch.

NEXT TIME: Prime Time, 1981

A Comic Reader

By Sam Kujava

Who among us DID NOT have some curiosity about the new DC title, CAPTAIN CARROT AND HIS AMAZING ZOO CREW? Years ago, when the comic books were possessed of variety rather than rubber-stamp formula, the publishers of SUPERMAN and BATMAN were also the publishers of BOB HOPE, JERRY LEWIS, SUGAR AND SPIKE, THE FOX AND THE CROW, and SWING WITH SCOOTER.

But let us not dwell in the past. It is 1981, comic book sales are lower than ever, the fandom elite is being pandered to with KA-ZAR and MOON KNIGHT, and the anti-hero cycle, which has been driven into the dirt by hack writers, has made reading the new books more of a depressing chore than a joy. Our heroes have been imbued with so much "humanity" (immaturity) that any semblance of heroics seems an afterthought, at best an interruption of all the soap-operatic nonsense that afflicts everyone from Superman on down.

Along comes the aforementioned CAPTAIN CARROT, his first appearance an insert in the middle of the NEW TEEN TITANS #16 (NTT being an embarrassing imitation of Marvel's X-MEN).

Let me set the stage for those of you who missed this ground-breaking project...animals dress up as superheroes. Get it? And just so this isn't too confusing to the average moron, it's set on YET ANOTHER parallel earth! My favorite animal-hero is FASTBACK. You'll never guess -- he's a turtle with super-speed! Boy, you can stay up nights and not come up with a more original concept! Oh, I forgot to mention at the outset, this is a HUMOR strip!

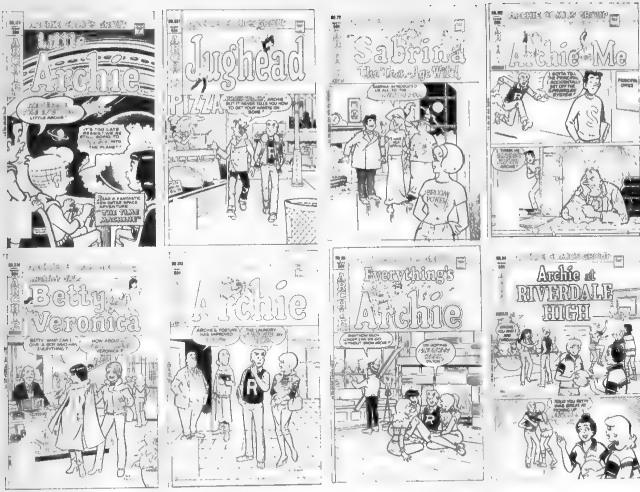
You think me too cruel? But wait, the creators have protected themselves! So that one cannot unfairly compare this sad creature to all the well-thought-out funny animal humor of yesteryear, we are advised in bold type above the title: NOT JUST ANOTHER FUNNY-ANIMAL COMIC! That's for sure. The sad thing is it's also NOT FUNNY. But what the heck. You've gotta hand it to DC. They've finally come up with something for MARVEL to imitate!

As if I had to prove my "rubber stamp" accusation, DC is cancelling three of their mystery books, as well as ADVENTURE COMICS, which appealed to a younger audience. But, not to worry -- more super-hero books are on the horizon. It's a safe bet that they're just like all the others.

Simple pleasures are the best -- I've raved about DAREDEVIL and FANTASTIC FOUR in past columns, but then, who hasn't? On the other hand, some very nice things have been going on in THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD, courtesy of writer Alan Brennert, who, after his smash debut in DETECTIVE #500, has scored most recently in B&B with two of Batman's oddest team-ups, the Hawk and the Dove, and now Robin and Batwoman of Earth-Two. Tough assignments that Brennert is enough of a writer to bring off with real panache! One was prepared not to like these stories, but DAMN if it isn't NICE to see a writer take a real gamble and succeed! Jim Aparo's art is better than ever, also; he must sense a real winner in the scripting department as I do! More, Mr. Brennert, if you please!

GOODBYE -- SHE-HULK, demoted to Nick Fury status (she'll probably show up in every other Marvel mag) after twenty-five, long, unnecessary issues. Although the concept was bad and the raison d'etre was unfortunate, what interested me most was the ongoing sub-plot about the conniving witch that was secretly ruining the relationship between Jen Walters and her father, while taking the sheriff for all his money and property. I know that by the last issue, the sheriff knew what this woman was really like, and kicked her out, but everyone's financial status was still up in the air. Okay, so they want us to read follow-up stories to tie up those loose ends, but darn it -- I still felt cheated. Of course, if I was cynical, I might think the main objective of a comic, TO ENTERTAIN, had been replaced by the more mercenary KEEP 'EM HANGIN'.

A COMIC READER READS -- NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY #25...One of the better comics takes a dive with this Martin Pasko fill-in script. Penciller and inker seemed uninspired and I can't say I blame them, but that is eclipsed by one of the worst coloring jobs in recent memory. It substantiates what I said in my earlier columns, but that doesn't make me happy to view this alternately garish/muddy mess. Take a look at it on the newsstand, but don't waste your sixty cents...WONDER WOMAN #288: Colan's art is wildly inconsistent. I'll say it again until somebody hears me: Doesn't anybody EDIT these books? Correct me if I'm wrong, but I perceive today's system of giving writer and artist carte blanche, leaving the editor as a meaningless figurehead, a buddy of the creative team that lets his pals have their fun. At our expense. The new emblem gracing Wonder Woman's Amazonian chest speaks volumes on the widening gap between the people on either side of the comic scene. This ridiculous claptrap about a W.W. Foundation is foisted on us, and a forty-year-old character who has always been a symbol of individualism, of being true to oneself, is given the deep six in favor of the "SENSATIONAL NEW WONDER WOMAN." C'mon folks, we all know that NEW is not necessarily BETTER! But of course,



Kahn and Co. don't even care about the character of Princess Diana. They just want to sell more tee-shirts and soap dishes.

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #84 -- Kind of a cheesy book, but I like it. I'm generally interested in finding out what happens to the doomed Giant-Man. Bill Foster was one of the great supporting characters from Marvel's golden years, and I'm almost on the edge of my seat wondering if another good guy is on the way out. The art by Ron Wilson and Chic Stone gets grotesque in the close-ups.

UNKNOWN SOLDIER #259 -- "Voices" by Robert Kanigher and Dan Spiegle is great. As for the CAPT. STORM strip, poor old JFK has gotta be rolling in his grave. He doesn't look the same in two panels and the overall art by Adrian Gonzales makes me dread his debut on ALL-STAR SQUADRON, a book that, up to now, I've liked.

STAR TREK #18 -- For this crap the rights to the book were taken away from Gold Key Comics? The last issue, and good riddance.

ACTION COMICS #527 -- A mild Marv Wolfman SUPERMAN lead-in, compared to what he's done to Supes in past efforts. Of course, it's NOTHING compared to what he's done with GREEN LANTERN! Back in the mid-sixties, Broome and Kane played at "Marvelizing" GL. Wolfman's flat out done it and it hurts to see how the mighty have fallen (a Marv Wolfman specialty).

BATMAN and DETECTIVE COMICS, recent issues -- The sub-plots of the mayoral race and Poison Ivy's strangle-hold over the Wayne Foundation are heaps more interesting than the tiresome "THE Batman, Creature of the Night" schtick, but they've gone on way too long. I'd like to see Bruce Wayne have a nervous breakdown after all these loose ends are tied up, and come back a more sane, restrained man. Realize that all those contrived arguments with Dick Grayson were a bad dream, if not the concept of a bad writer... I'M dreaming, aren't I?

Archie News

Jeffrey Mendel and Michael Uslan have edited another collection of Archie Comics reprints for Warner Books, this once called THE BEST OF BETTY AND VERONICA. Included are a bibliography, index and history of the origins of the girls and their (ahem) development. This one costs $12.95.

Coming Comics

ARCHIE GIANT SERIES MAGAZINE No. 516, March. This issue features THE WORLD OF ARCHIE. [11/24]

ARCHIE'S GIRLS, BETTY AND VERONICA No. 314, February. [11/24]

PEP No. 382, February. [11/24]

ARCHIE No. 313, February. [12/1]

ARCHIE GIANT SERIES MAGAZINE No. 517, April. This issue features THE WORLD OF JUGHEAD. [12/1]

JUGHEAD No. 321, February. [12/1]

LAUGH No. 371, February. [12/1]

ARCHIE...ARCHIE ANDREWS, WHERE ARE YOU DIGEST No. 21, February. [12/8]

ARCHIE AT RIVERDALE HIGH No. 84, February. [12/8]

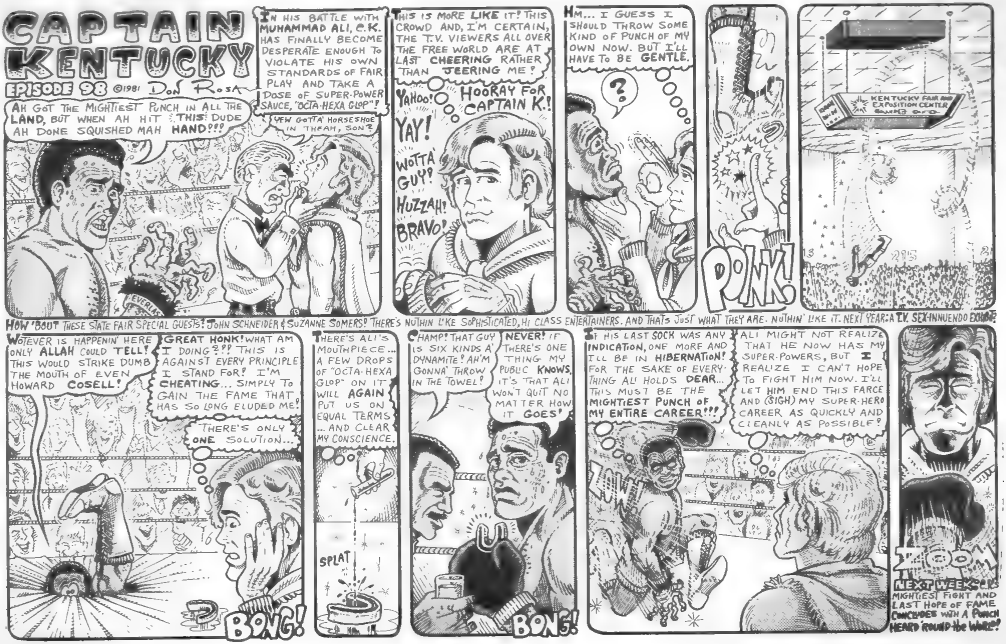
LITTLE ARCHIE No. 174, February. [12/8]

SABRINA THE TEEN-AGE WITCH No. 72, February. [12/8]

ARCHIE AND ME No. 132, February [12/15]

ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST No. 52, February. [12/15]

EVERYTHING'S ARCHIE No. 99, February. [12/15]


CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
EPISODE 98 ©1981 Don Rosa
IN HIS BATTLE WITH MUHAMMAD ALI, C.K. HAS FINALLY BECOME DESPERATE ENOUGH TO VIOLATE HIS OWN STANDARDS OF FAIR PLAY AND TAKE A DOSE OF SUPER-POWER SAUCE, 'OCTA-HEXA GLOP'!
AH GOT THE MIGHTIEST PUNCH IN ALL THE LAND, BUT WHEN AH HIT THIS DUDE AH DONE SQUISHED MAH HAND!!!
I'VEN GOTTA HORSESHOE IN THERE, SON!
THIS IS MORE LIKE IT! THIS CROWD AND, I'M CERTAIN, THE T.V. VIEWERS ALL OVER THE FREE WORLD ARE AT LAST CHEERING RATHER THAN JEERING ME!
YAHOO!
HOORAY FOR CAPTAIN K!
YAY!
WOTTA GUY!
HUZZAH!
BRAVO!
HMM... I GUESS I SHOULD THROW SOME KIND OF PUNCH OF MY OWN NOW. BUT I'LL HAVE TO BE GENTLE.
?
PONK!
KENTUCKY FAIR AND EXPOSITION CENTER
HOW 'BOUT THESE STATE FAIR SPECIAL GUESTS? JOHN SCHNEIDER & SUZANNE SOMERS? THERE'S NUTHIN' LIKE SOPHISTICATED, HI-CLASS ENTERTAINERS. AND THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY ARE. NUTHIN' LIKE IT. NEXT YEAR: A T.V. SEX-INNUENDO EXTRAVAGANZA!
WOTEVER IS HAPPENIN' HERE ONLY ALLAH COULD TELL! THIS WOULD STRIKE DUMB THE MOUTH OF EVEN HOWARD COSELL!
GREAT HONK! WHAT AM I DOING?! THIS IS AGAINST EVERY PRINCIPLE I STAND FOR! I'M CHEATING... SIMPLY TO GAIN THE FAME THAT HAS SO LONG ELUDED ME!
THERE'S ONLY ONE SOLUTION...
BONG!
THERE'S ALI'S MOUTHPIECE... A FEW DROPS OF 'OCTA-HEXA GLOP' ON IT WILL AGAIN PUT US ON EQUAL TERMS... AND CLEAR MY CONSCIENCE.
SPLAT
C'MAHP! THAT GUY'S GOT SIX KINDS OF DYNAMITE! AH'M GONNA THROW IN THE TOWEL!
WAEVER! IF THERE'S ONE THING MY PUBLIC KNOWS, IT'S THAT ALI WON'T QUIT NO MATTER HOW IT GOES!
BONG!
IF HIS LAST SOCK WAS ANY INDICATION, ONE MORE AND I'LL BE IN HIBERNATION! FOR THE SAKE OF EVERY THING ALI HOLDS DEAR... THIS MUST BE THE MIGHTIEST PUNCH OF MY ENTIRE CAREER!!!
ALI MIGHT NOT REALIZE THAT HE NOW HAS MY SUPER-POWERS, BUT I REALIZE I CAN'T HOPE TO FIGHT HIM NOW. I'LL LET HIM END THIS FARCE AND (SIGH) MY SUPER-HERO CAREER AS QUICKLY AND CLEANLY AS POSSIBLE!
KRAK-BOOM
NEXT WEEK: THE MIGHTIEST FIGHT AND LAST HOPE OF FAME. CONCLUDES WITH A PUNCH HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD!

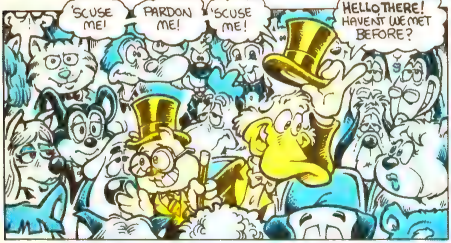
DICK DUCK, DUCK DICK

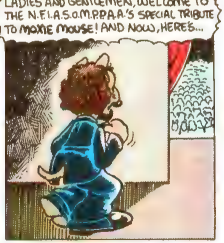
CASE #419-A

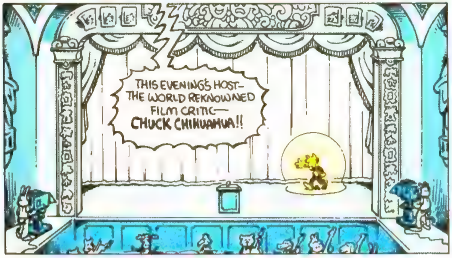
"HEROES & VILLAINS"

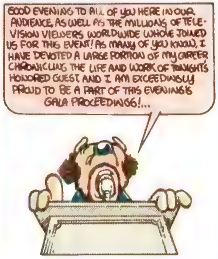
CHAPTER: 11

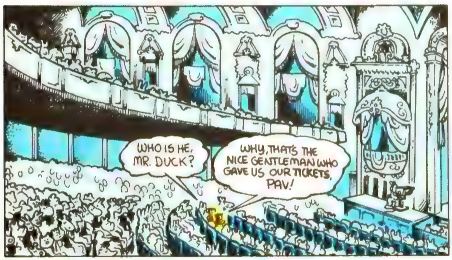
by Jim Engel ©1981





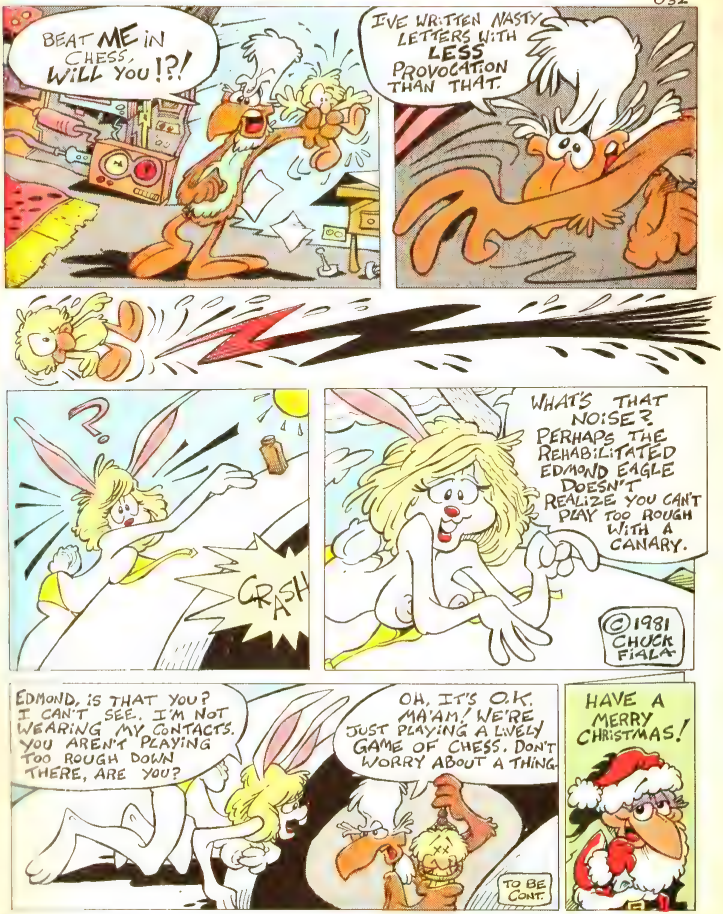


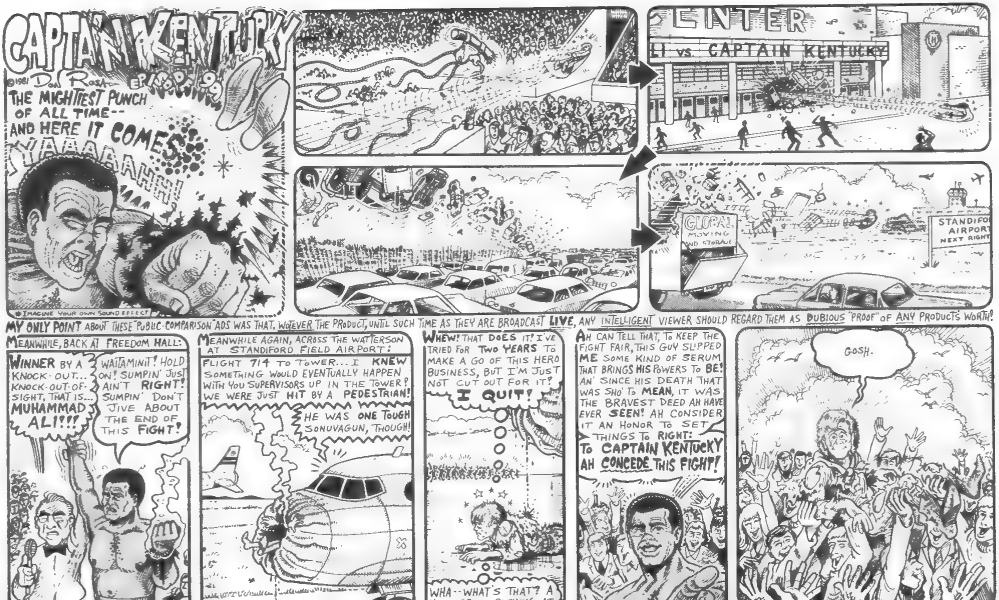

GOOD EVENING TO ALL OF YOU HERE IN OUR AUDIENCE, AS WELL AS THE MILLIONS OF TELE-VISION VIEWERS WORLDWIDE WHOM JOINED US FOR THE EVENT! AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, I HAVE DEVOTED A LARGE PORTION OF MY CAREER CHRONICLING THE LIFE AND WORK OF TWINKETS HONORED GUEST AND I AM EXCEEDINGLY PROUD TO BE A PART OF THIS EVENINGS GALA PROCEEDINGS!...



TONIGHTS PROGRAM ALSO KICKS OFF A SERIES OF NATION-WIDE SHOWINGS OF MOXIE MOUSE FILMS IN LOCAL THEATRES, AND STARTING NEXT MONTH, MR. MOUSE WILL HOST A 12-PART TV SERIES ON THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMEDY! NEW GENERATIONS OF FILM VIEWERS WILL BE ABLE TO DELIGHT IN THE ANTICS OF THE WORLDS MOST BELOVED CLOWN! SO NOW IF YA'RE QUITE READY, LET US BEGIN!!
TO BE CONTINUED

BULLET ★ ★ ★ FOWL OF FORTUNE CROW by CHUCK FIALA


BEAT ME IN CHESS, WILL YOU!?!
I'VE WRITTEN NASTY LETTERS WITH LESS PROVOCATION THAN THAT.
?
CRASH
WHAT'S THAT NOISE? PERHAPS THE REHABILITATED EDMOND EAGLE DOESN'T REALIZE YOU CAN'T PLAY TOO ROUGH WITH A CANARY.
©1981 CHUCK FIALA
EDMOND, IS THAT YOU? I CAN'T SEE. I'M NOT WEARING MY CONTACTS. YOU AREN'T PLAYING TOO ROUGH DOWN THERE, ARE YOU?
OH, IT'S O.K. MA'AM! WE'RE JUST PLAYING A LIVELY GAME OF CHESS. DON'T WORRY ABOUT A THING.
TO BE CONT.
HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS!


CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
©1981 Dan Raskin
THE MIGHTIEST PUNCH OF ALL TIME--
AND HERE IT COMES!
KAAABAAM!
Imagine your own sound effect
ENTER
LI vs CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
CLIPAT MOVING AND STORAGE
STANDIFORD AIRPORT NEXT RIGHT
MY ONLY POINT ABOUT THESE PUBLIC COMPARISON ADS WAS THAT, WHEVER THE PRODUCT, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THEY ARE BROADCAST LIVE, ANY INTELLIGENT VIEWER SHOULD REGARD THEM AS DUBIOUS "PROOF" OF ANY PRODUCTS WORTH!
MEANWHILE, BACK AT FREEDOM HALL!
WINNER BY A KNOCK-OUT... KNOCK-OUT-OF-SIGHT, THAT IS... MUHAMMAD ALI!!!
WAITAMINIT! HOLD ON! SUMPIN' JUST AIN'T RIGHT! SUMPIN' DON'T JIVE ABOUT THE END OF THIS FIGHT!
MEANWHILE AGAIN, ACRASS THE WATTERSON AT STANDIFORD FIELD AIRPORT.!
FLIGHT 714 TO TOWER... I KNEW SOMETHING WOULD EVENTUALLY HAPPEN WITH YOU SUPERVISORS UP IN THE TOWER! WE WERE JUST HIT BY A PEDESTRIAN!
HE WAS ONE TOUGH SONUVAGUN, THOUGH!
WHEW! THAT DOES IT! I'VE TRIED FOR TWO YEARS TO MAKE A GO OF THIS HERO BUSINESS, BUT I'M JUST NOT CUT OUT FOR IT!
I QUIT!
WHA--WHAT'S THAT? A
AH CAN TELL THAT, TO KEEP THE FIGHT FAIR, THIS GUY SLIPPED ME SOME KIND OF SERUM THAT BRINGS HIS POWERS TO BE AN SINCE HIS DEATH THAT WAS SHO' TO MEAN, IT WAS THE BRAVEST DEED AH HAVE EVER SEEN! AH CONSIDER IT AN HONOR TO SET THINGS TO RIGHT!
TO CAPTAIN KENTUCKY AH CONCEDE THIS FIGHT!
GOSH.

SUPERMAN by Siegel & Shuster

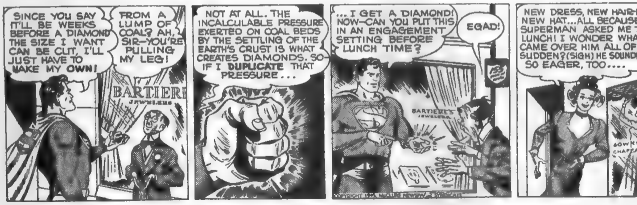
IT TOOK SOME INGENUITY TO GET RID OF THAT POP-EYED CLOWN. BUT I DON'T THINK HE'LL TROUBLE METROPOLIS AGAIN FOR SOME TIME...
UPSIDE DOWN DINER
MXYZTPLK SAID HE WAS IN DUTCH WITH THE KING FOR DOING HIM A HOT-FOOT, SO I GUESS HE'LL BE COOLING HIS HEELS IN SOME FOURTH DIMENSIONAL CELL FOR QUITE A WHILE!
DAYS LATER -- IN THE VILLAGE OF BE ASLEVILLE...
IN REPLY TO OUR INQUIRY ABOUT MR. MICKLE PICKLE, THAT LITTLE FELLOW WE TAUGHT HOW TO COOK, SUPERMAN SAYS HE'S LEFT TOWN FOR GOOD.
WELL, PIN MY EARS BACK!
AFTER ALL OUR WORK TO MAKE A SOLID CITIZEN OUT OF HIM, THE LITTLE TRAMP HITS THE ROAD AGAIN!
MAYBE HE WAS JUST A TRAMP, ANNABELLE, BUT (SIGH) HE WAS SO CUTE WHEN HE CALLED US "AUNTIE!"

IT SEEMED JUST LIKE ANY OTHER MORNING IN THE LIFE OF LOIS LANE, BUT...
NO-HUM! WHO CAN THAT BE SO EARLY IN THE MORNING?
HELLO? WHAT? WHO? OH-- YOU! WHY, CERTAINLY! WHY, YES! WHY, I'D BE DELIGHTED! WHY, I'D LOVE TO! OF COURSE! Y-YES, YES!!
OH, DEAR-- WHAT'LL I WEAR? I WONDER IF I'LL HAVE TIME TO MAKE THE HAIRDRESSER, AND I SIMPLY MUST GET MY NAILS DONE...
HM-- THIS NEW OUTFIT'S A BIT SNUG, BUT IT HAS A SMOOTHER DRAPE THAN THE OLD ONE. AT LEAST, I HOPE SO. TODAY, I'VE GOT TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION...

YOU SEEM SO EXCITED, MISS LANE. IS IT A NEW BOY FRIEND?
UH-NOT EXACTLY. TELL ME, HELEN, DO YOU THINK I'D LOOK WELL IN BLUE? I JUST SAW THE DARLINGEST DRESS IN ONE OF THE STORES!
GOODNESS, DEARIE-- CALM YOURSELF. YOU'LL TEAR THE DRESS! IS IT A WEDDING?
ER-UH-NO. AN ENGAGEMENT-- A LUNCHEON ENGAGEMENT!
BUT REALLY, MISTER SUPERMAN, A LARGER DIAMOND THAN THAT ISN'T LIKELY TO BE STOCKED ANYWHERE. IF YOU'D GIVE US A MONTH...
NO-- I MUST HAVE IT BY LUNCH TIME!

DOESN'T IT SEEM A LITTLE TOO-WELL EXTREME FOR A LUNCHEON DATE?
WITH A FIGURE LIKE YOURS? GOODNESS, NO, DEARIE!
BUT A STONE THAT SIZE YOU WANT WOULD HAVE TO BE CUT TO ORDER AND THAT TAKES WEEKS.
NEVERTHELESS, I MUST FIND A LARGER DIAMOND BY LUNCHTIME.
BARTHEE'S
AH-- THERE'S MY DIAMOND!
DIAMOND? OH YES-- THE COAL-- "BLACK DIAMONDS"? HA-HA! YOU WILL HAVE YOUR LITTLE JOKE, SIR, BUT-UH-I DON'T QUITE SEE YOUR POINT...
DIAMOND FIRE

The Menomonee Falls Gazette


SINCE YOU SAY IT'LL BE WEEKS BEFORE A DIAMOND THE SIZE I WANT CAN BE CUT, I'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE MY OWN!
FROM A LUMP OF COAL? AH, SIR—YOURE PULLING MY LEG!
BARTIERE JEWELERS
NOT AT ALL. THE INCALCULABLE PRESSURE EXERTED ON COAL BEDS BY THE SETTLING OF THE EARTH'S CRUST IS WHAT CREATES DIAMONDS. SO IF I DUPLICATE THAT PRESSURE...
...I GET A DIAMOND! NOW—CAN YOU PUT THIS IN AN ENGAGEMENT SETTING BEFORE LUNCH TIME?
EGAD!
BARTIERE JEWELERS
NEW DRESS, NEW HAIR-DO, NEW HAT...ALL BECAUSE SUPERMAN ASKED ME TO LUNCH! I WONDER WHAT CAME OVER HIM ALL OF SUDDEN? (SIGH) HE SOUNDED SO EAGER, TOO....

(—WHEN SUPERMAN PHONED AND ASKED ME TO LUNCH, HE SOUNDED SO EAGER. ALMOST AS IF HE WERE THINKING—BUT—I'M GETTING 'WAY AHEAD OF MYSELF.—)
DINER
THERE SHE IS, GAUNT! AND ALL HORSED UP LIKE SHE WAS GOING TO A WEDDING!
WOMAN'S ATTIRE, MY DEAR FELLOW IS INGENIOUSLY CONTRIVED TO DIVERT THE INTELLIGENT MALE FROM PERCEIVING ESSENTIAL FEMALE STUPIDITY.
LOOK! SHE'S MEETING SUPERMAN! WE CAN'T GRAB HER NOW!

YES—SHE'S ENTERING THE RESTAURANT WITH THAT MUSCLE-BOUND AGITATOR OF FEMALE HEARTS, SUPERMAN. DRIVE ON, BEAZLY. WE'LL HAVE TO GRAB OUR PRETTY HOSTAGE ANOTHER TIME....
THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER ASKED ME TO LUNCH, THIS IS AN OCCASION!
QUITE AN OCCASION, LOIS. YOU SEE—MY NAME—SUPERMAN—AH—YOU LIKE IT, DON'T YOU? THAT IS—
WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY? OF COURSE I LIKE IT. WHAT A PECULIAR QUESTION!
WELL—UH—THAT ISN'T EXACTLY—UH—WHAT I MEANT WAS—UH—
LOIS—WILL YOU MARRY ME?

LOIS! DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? I—I JUST ASKED YOU TO MARRY ME?
LOIS? WHAT'S WRONG? DON'T KEEP ME IN SUSPENSE LIKE THIS! WILL YOU MARRY ME?
Y-YES..

THE SEEKERS
by John Burns

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I SHALL BE CHAINED HAND AND FOOT...
THAT NIGHT AT THE PIER THEATRE...
...LOCKED INSIDE THIS COFFIN OF THE ANCIENT PHARAOHS...
QUITE AN ACT EH JACOB? THEY SAY HE CAN ESCAPE FROM ANYTHING!
LIKE MAYBE HIS MISSING DAUGHTER, WHEN SHE DIVED INTO THE SEA THIS AFTERNOON! ONLY WHERE DID SHE ESCAPE TO?

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
CHAINED INSIDE A MUMMY CASE ON THE STAGE OF THE SEASIDE THEATRE...
PRESTO! NO BONDS— NO TOMB— CAN HOLD ME!
BRUCE ALVERTON, STAR ESCAPOLOGIST IS FREE WITHIN SECONDS...
BUT THEN...
MY GOD!

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
R250
HE'S COLLAPSED!
IS...IS HE DEAD JACOB?
NO... JUST PASSED OUT. HELP ME GET HIM TO HIS DRESSING ROOM...
WHEN ALVERTON FINALLY COMES ROUND...
SORT OF
DELAYED SHOCK, I S'POSE... MY DAUGHTER DISAPPEARING LIKE THAT THIS AFTERNOON. WHO ARE YOU TWO ANYWAY? THE POLICE?
WHY SHOULD YOU THINK THAT, MR. ALVERTON? HAS THERE BEEN ANY CRIME COMMITTED?

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
R251
JACOB INTRODUCES HIMSELF AND ELSBANNE TO THE ESCAPOLOGIST...
WE FIND MISSING PEOPLE MR. ALVERTON LIKE YOUR DAUGHTER GLORIA. THAT'S IF THE... UM... PRICE IS RIGHT...
AND IF THE CASE INTRIGUES US— WHICH THIS ONE DOES! I MEAN, HOW COME SUCH AN EXPERT SWIMMER AS HER SUDDENLY VANISHES—
'N A SEA AS CALM AS A DEAD SEA!

The Menomonee Falls Gazette

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
HIRED BY BRUCE ALVERTON TO FIND HIS VANISHED DAUGHTER, THE SEEKERS PLUMB THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN IN WHICH SHE WAS LAST SEEN TO DIVE...
R252
BUT...
NOT PER SHAN SUDE!
THEN LET'S GET BACK TO ALVERTON AND PUT OUR OTHER PLAN INTO ACTION...
THERE'S OBVIOUSLY NOTHING DOWN THERE!
THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
R254
JACOB AND SUSANNE PUT FORWARD THEIR IDEA TO ALVERTON: THE ESCAPOLOGIST...
JOIN MY ACT ON STAGE TONIGHT? BUT... BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU COULDN'T DO IT!
WHY NOT? I ONCE PICKED THE LOCK OF A LOO WHEN THE BOL" JAMMED!
IT'S ONLY TO GIVE US A COVER SO THAT WE CAN NOSE BACKSTAGE WITHOUT ROUSING TOO MUCH SUSPICION...
BECAUSE WE THINK THE KEY TO THIS MYSTERY OF YOUR DAUGHTER—
WHAT IS IT, MAN?
LOOK!
THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
R255
DIDN'T YOU SEE IT? A FACE... AT THE WINDOW! SOMEONE WAS WATCHING US!
SUSANNE SPRINGS FORWARD...
ANY SIGN OF OUR PEEPING TOM?
DON'T SEE HOW THERE COULD BE, JACOB...
APART FROM A NOSEY SEAGULL, WHO ELSE WOULD HAVE BEEN OUTSIDE THIS WINDOW?
THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
SEEKERS JACOB AND SUSANNE ARE INVESTIGATING THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF GLORIA ALVERTON...
NOT KNOWING WHETHER MY DAUGHTER IS DROWNED OR WHAT...THEN STARTING TO SEE FACES THAT AREN'T THERE — I DON'T THINK I CAN DO A SHOW TONIGHT.
YOU CAN, IF YOU STOP LEANING TOO HEAVILY ON THIS STUFF...
R256
WE'LL BE HELPING YOU, REMEMBER WHILE WE'RE LOOKING TO SEE IF THERE'S ANY CLUE BACKSTAGE TO GLORIA'S VANISHING ACT!
UNLESS YOU'D RATHER CALL IN THE POLICE...?
NO! N-NOT THE POLICE!
NOW I WONDER WHY THE AMAZING ALVERTON IS SCARED OF THE LAW?

THE SEEKERS
by John Burns

THE SEEKERS
(w.) J. M. Burns
P. Douglas
JOINING MY ACT TO HELP FIND GLORIA MEANS YOU TWO INVESTIGATORS WILL NEED SOME KIND OF REHEARSA....
AND IF MISS DOVE IS GOING TO TAKE MY DAUGHTER'S PLACE ON STAGE TONIGHT SHE'LL BE TO LEARN TO...
...SAW ME IN HA..F!
ME? I CAN'T EVEN CUT BREAD STRAIGHT!

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... THAT GREAT ESCAPOLOGIST, THE AMAZING ALVERTON, IS NOW, AS YOU SEE, BEING LOWERED INTO THIS BOX, IMPRISONED IN A STRAIT-JACKET...
AND AS THE LID IS NAILED SECURELY ON THE BOX... ENTER SUSANNE, THE EXECUTIONER...
...OR THE PRISONER 'N HA..?
OH, HELP! WITH ONLY ONE MEASLY REHEARSAL, I MIGHT JUST DO THAT!
THE PIER THEATRE... EVENING PERFORMANCE...

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
INVESTIGATING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GLORIA ALVERTON, THE SEEKERS JOIN HER FATHER'S STAGE ACT...
SUSANNE HAS ALMOST SAWN THROUGH THE BOX. LADIES AND GENTS... THE BOX WHICH HOLDS BRUCE ALVERTON... A PRISONER!
OH GOSH STAND BY WITH THE SELLOTAPE, SOMEBODY!
HA-HA, FEAR NOT, FOLKS — THE AMAZING ALVERTON, GOOD AS NEW, WILL NOW REAPPEAR BEFORE YOU...!
BUT WHEN HE DOESN'T...
THIS WASN'T A REHEARSAL — WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
ALVERTON, THE ESCAPOLOGIST, HAS PERFORMED HIS 'DISAPPEARING' ACT — BUT WHEN HE FAILS TO REAPPEAR ON CUE...
YAH WHERE'S HE GONE...TO SEE A GOOD SHOW?
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MR JACOB? ANY MINUTE NOW THAT LOT WILL START THROWING ROTTEN EGGS AT US!
THEN...
THERE HE IS!
AND BY THE LOOK OF HIM — HALF-CUT!
OR... OR HAS THE MYSTERY OF HIS DAUGHTER DRIVEN HIM MAD?

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
RING DOWN THE RUDDY CURTAIN! CAN'T YOU SEE THIS BLOKE'S SICK?
WE'LL TAKE YOU BACK TO YOUR DRESSING ROOM, BRUCE... Y'KNOW, YOU GAVE US QUITE A SCARE JUST NOW. DISAPPEARING LIKE THAT!
THAT'S WHAT YOU EXPECT OF THE AMAZING ALVERTON, ISN'T IT? TO VANISH, THEN COME BACK — TO ESCAPE BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES...
BUT IF YOU WATCH CLOSELY, SEEKERS, YOU'LL SEE THAT NO ONE CAN ESCAPE... DEATH!
THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
THE SEEKERS ARE DISTURBED BY THE ESCAPOLOGIST'S STRANGE BEHAVIOUR...
WHAT'S ALL THIS TALK OF DEATH? WHOSE DEATH?
GLORIA'S?
WHO ELSE? I'M CONVINCED NOW MY POOR LASS WAS DROWNED!
CONVINCED? SUDDENLY? JUST LIKE THAT?
AND DROWNING YOURSELF— IN THAT STUFF— ISN'T GOING TO HELP, FELLA...
IT'S NOT A BOTTLE I'M REACHING FOR, BENEDICK...
THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
BRUCE ALVERTON, ESCAPOLOGIST, SEEMS CONVINCED NOW THAT HIS DAUGHTER WAS DROWNED DURING A HIGH-DIVING DISPLAY...
THAT...THAT'S HOW SHE DISAPPEARED. SO THERE'S NO MYSTERY FOR YOU TO SOLVE
BUT I HOPE THIS WILL COMPENSATE FOR THE TIME YOU'VE WASTED... SOMETHING I'D LIKE YOU TO HAVE...
NO, DON'T OPEN IT HERE... JUST GO. LEAVE ME ALONE!
THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
THE SEEKERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN A SMALL ATTACHÉ CASE BY BRUCE ALVERTON FOR SERVICES RENDERED...
OPEN IT UP, JACOB! I'M DYING TO KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE
HMM, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO GIVE OTHER PEOPLE ...BOMBS! WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE WE PEEK...
...SO HURRY AND GET CHANGED, SWEETIE!
LATER... ON A DESERTED PART OF THE BEACH...
YE GODS! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

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PAUL TEMPLE
by Durbridge & Mendoza

PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS, LEVKIS, BUT IF IT IS A QUESTION OF MONEY...
IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF MONEY, MR. KAPSKOUS
12
YOU KEEP THEM COVERED, SKANOS! I WILL DEAL WITH THE AIRCREW
RIGHT!
NOW SETTLE DOWN, EVERYBODY! IN HALF AN HOUR WE SHALL LAND. YOU WILL IN DUE COURSE BE TAKEN TO ATHENS — ALL SAVE MISS MIKA KAPSKOUS, AND SHE WILL COME TO NO HARM. THERE WILL BE NO RANSOM!
PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
LEVKIS FORCES THE PILOT, AT GUNPOINT, TO ALTER COURSE...
THEY SHOULD HANG PEOPLE LIKE YOU!
JUST FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS — AND NEVER MIND THE COMPLIMENTS
13
...AND SOON THE HI-JACKED AIRCRAFT IS FLYING DOWN THE ADRIATIC AND OVER THE STRAITS OF OTRANTO...
WE SEEM TO BE LOSING HEIGHT FAIRLY FAST... WHERE D'YOU RECKON WE ARE NOW?
OVER THE IONIAN SEA, APPROACHING THE PELOPONNESE — AND I THINK I CAN SEE WHERE WE ARE GOING TO BE LANDED!
PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
14
THE COAST IS PRETTY DESERTED ALONG HERE... AND DO YOU SEE SOME-THING ELSE, MR. TEMPLE?
YES — SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE AN AIRFIELD
YOU MUST BE CRAZY. WE CAN'T LAND THERE!
YOU WILL LAND — AND YOU WILL LAND SAFELY
YES, MR. TEMPLE, A WAR-TIME AIRFIELD, LONG SINCE ABANDONED...
BUT SOMEBODY SEEMS TO HAVE TRIED TO CLEAR THE RUNWAY
PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
SOMEBODY SEEMS TO BE EXPECTING US. I CAN SEE A PETROL TANKER AND A MOTOR COACH BETWEEN THOSE OLD HANGARS
15
THE LANDING IS ROUGH — BUT SUCCESSFUL...
YOU WILL TAXI UP TO THE HANGARS — AND NO NONSENSE... I HAVE FRIENDS THERE, AND THEY TOO ARE ARMED
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HAVE ANY FRIENDS!

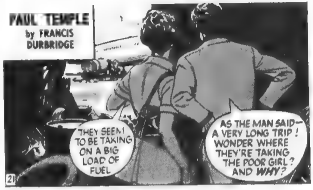
PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
KEEP AN EYE ON THE CREW WHILE I TALK TO THE PASSENGERS...
YOU WILL DISEMBARK HERE— ALL SAVE MIKA KAPSKOUS. A COACH WILL TAKE YOU ON TO ATHENS
I'M AFRAID WE HAVE NO PROPER GANGWAY— YOU WILL HAVE TO USE THE LADDER PROVIDED!
16

PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
I DEMAND TO KNOW WHERE YOU ARE TAKING MY DAUGHTER!
SHALL WE SAY— TO OLYMPUS? THE AIRCRAFT WILL BE REFUELLED— FOR A VERY LONG FLIGHT!
I SHALL FIND YOU, LEVKIS— IF IT COSTS ME MY LAST LEPTA— AND I SHALL DESTROY YOU
GOODBYE, MIKA. DON'T WORRY. WE WILL FIND YOU!
I THINK YOU OUGHT TO LET ME STAY WITH MISS KAPSKOUS— SHE'S VERY UPSET
ALL RIGHT, MISS PETERS. YOU MAY STAY
17

PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
SEEMS THEY'RE LETTING ANN PETERS STAY WITH MIKA
GOOD! SHE'LL NEED SOMEBODY TO LOOK AFTER HER— WITH THAT LOT
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, TEMPLE? MAKE A RUN FOR IT?
NOT WITH ALL THESE GUNS ABOUT, BILL. BUT I'VE GOT HALF AN IDEA...
DO US A FAVOUR, BILL... WHEN I SAY 'NOW,' CREATE A DIVERSION— THROW A FIT, OR SOMETHING, EH?
WILL DO!
18

PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
TEMPLE WAS PERSUADED BILL GORDON TO CREATE A DIVERSION...
NOW, BILL!
RIGHT, COBBER!
UR-R-R-RGH!
QUICK, STEVE... INSIDE!
COME ON, GET UP. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU— JUST TOO MUCH CHAMPAGNE
19

PAUL TEMPLE
by Durbridge & Mendoza


PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
THEY SEEM TO BE TAKING ON A BIG LOAD OF FUEL
AS THE MAN SAID— A VERY LONG TRIP! I WONDER WHERE THEY'RE TAKING THE POOR GIRL? AND WHY?
21

PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
I GET IT! THAT TALK ABOUT A LONG TRIP WAS ALL A BLIND. THEY'RE NOT TAKING MIKA SO FAR AFTER ALL
23

SKANOS IS STAYING IN THE AIRCRAFT. HE'LL FORCE THE CREW TO FLY FAR ENOUGH SO THAT THEY CAN'T DO ANYTHING UNTIL MIKA'S DELIVERED — AND THE TRAIL'S COLD

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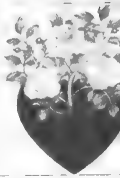

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December 1981

- ☐ THE SPIRIT #31

- ☐ ACTION COMICS #529
- ☐ ALL-STAR SQUADRON #7
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- ☐ THE UNCANNY X-MEN #155

Pacific Coming Comics

Beginning with the second issue, STARSLAYER will feature a back-up strip by Dave Stevens entitled THE ROCKETEER. Set in the '30s setting of Los Angeles, it features the story of a stunt pilot who discovers the first working jetpack, and will be six pages in length. That's in addition to the 25-page STARSLAYER strip, meaning a big reduction in house advertising from #1.

*STARSLAYER No. 2, March. The lead story is by Mike Grell and continues where #1 left off on the Jolly Roger. Also included: "The Rocketeer" by Dave Stevens, a new continuing hero strip. Grell did the cover. [12/29]

Kitchen Sink News

The Krupp Comic Works has announced three new Will Eisner-related volumes which will go on sale in December. These include THE ART OF WILL EISNER, the definitive word on Eisner's career to date, edited by Denis Kitchen and Cat Yronwode and featuring many unpublished covers, strips and illustrations with many examples from THE SPIRIT, of course, and text by Cat; 128 pages with some color for $9.95. Next is a collection of full-color SPIRIT stories in SPIRIT COLOR ALBUM Volume 1, which includes thirteen episodes for $11.95. The third is the WILL EISNER COLOR TREASURY, a 112-page hardcover for $13.95 which includes two SPIRIT stories, 25 SPIRIT Magazine covers (the Warren covers having been completely recolored by Eisner), plates, and illustrations, all in color, with text by Cat Yronwode. Krupp has also announced that THE SPIRIT #32 will cost $2.50, up from $2.00.

THE SPIRIT No. 31, 1981. Along with the usual collection of SPIRIT reprints is a new strip called "Stoops" by Will Eisner, an interview of Harvey Kurtzman by Eisner and the other usual features. [November]

Krupp has many other underground comix available; write for a catalogue from Krupp Distribution, No. 2 Swamp Road, Princeton, WI 54968.

CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
THE MOVIE CLIPS
EPISODE 100!
IN LIVE STILL-LIFE ACTION!
WRITTEN, PRODUCED, DIRECTED & ©1981 by Don Rosa
DIRECTOR of PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL COERS
SPECIAL EFFECTS: STEVE DURBIN
THIS IS JIM MITCHELL, KIRSTIE WILDE IS OFF TONIGHT... BUT ONLY A TAD.
WHAT?
OF COURSE, THE BIG NEWS TODAY IS THE EMERGENCE OF A REAL-LIFE SUPER-HERO RIGHT HERE IN LOUISVILLE! NATIONAL FAME HAS COME TO OUR OWN CAPTAIN KENTUCKY!
LOOK! UP IN THE SKY!
IT'S A BIRD!
IT'S A PLANE!
UGH! IT WAS A BIRD!
NO! IT'S
(SIGH)
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY!
JUST LISTEN TO THOSE CHEERING CROWDS? THIS WAS WORTH LABORING TWO YEARS IN OBSCURITY FOR! GOSH--I'LL HAFTA' HURRY TO KEEP UP WITH ALL THE PERSONAL APPEARANCES I HAVE SCHEDULED FOR TODAY!
OOO
WE'RE CERTAINLY HONORED TO HAVE THE ONE N' ONLY CAPTAIN KENTUCKY AS OUR SPECIAL GUEST HERE ON "LOUISVILLE TONIGHT"... TONIGHT. WE'LL RESCHEDULE GOV. BROWN AND PHIL PHIL AT A LATER DATE.
AND BE SURE TO STAY TUNED FOR "P.M. MAGAZINE" WHEN CHEF TELL PREPARES HIS NEW "CAPTAIN KENTUCKY FRUIT SALAD".
METZ HERE... YOU'RE ON THE AIR?
THIS IS BILL STANSBURY CALLING FROM... NEW ORLEANS, I THINK. I JUST WANTED TO JOIN IN AND TELL CAPTAIN KENTUCKY HOW PROUD WE ALL ARE TO HAVE SUCH A FINE HERO PROTECTING LEWISBURG!
WHATEVER
THAT'S "LOUISVILLE", MAYOR.
HOORAY FOR CAPTAIN KENTUCKY!
HUZZAH!
THREE CHEERS!
BRAVO!
HOORAH!

WOW! LOOK, MR ROWLAND! HERE GOES, CAPTAIN KENTUCKY! HEY- C.K.!!!
QUIET, YOU FOOL! HE MIGHT HEAR YOU! DON'T YOU KNOW WE LOST OUR INSURANCE?!
OOPS! I HOPE NOBODY CAN SEE MY GLASSES ON RADIO!
WOTTA DAY IT'S BEEN! IT'LL BE NICE TO GET HOME AND SWITCH BACK TO PLAIN OL' LANCELOT PERTWILLABY!
RIBIT!
WHEW! THIS GIRDLE IS KILLING ME!
WELL, CLEO... THIS MEANS A WHOLE NEW LIFE FOR C.K.! THE ENTIRE WORLD WILL RECOGNIZE THIS BLUE AND GOLD COSTUME!
A-EVERY-ONE RIGHT? I THINK SOME-ONE JUST CHEWED IT UP!
NEXT WEEK: BEGINNING C.K.'s 2nd 100!

CAPTAIN KENTUCKY GLOSSARY: EPISODE 99. The Kentucky Fair and Expo Center is next to the city's encircling Watterson X-Way, and the city airport is directly across the X-Way.

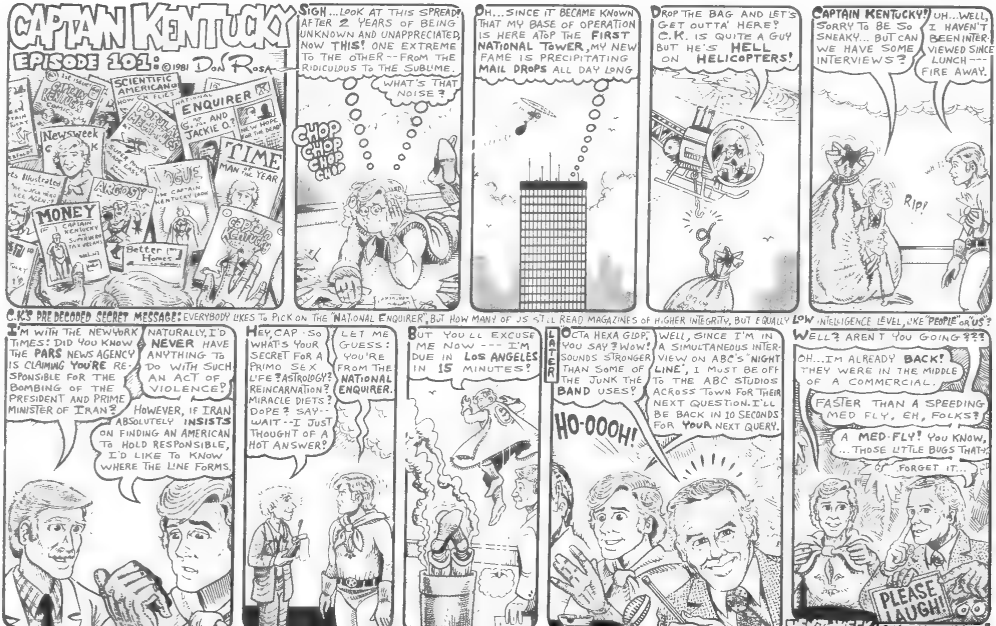
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY GLOSSARY: EPISODE 100. Jim Mitchell and Kirstie Wilde co-anchor the WHAS news; Tom Van Howe is a host on the evening WHAS TV magazine, LOUISVILLE TONIGHT; Milton Metz does "Metz Here," a popular radio (WHAS radio) call-in show; and though it may be hard to believe (even for US) in Louisville we have a mayor who OPENLY travels around the country (and the world) usually at city expense, WITH HIS MISTRESS! The 32-Alive Sky-Cam and J. Fred Frog are popular regulars in CAPTAIN KENTUCKY.

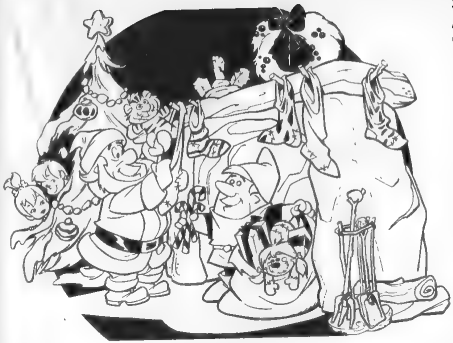
Cel Break

By Jim Korkis

THE RETURN OF BEATLEFAN. Last column, I mentioned that Christopher Cook had written an excellent article on the BEATLES cartoon series. (That issue, Volume 3, Number 5, is still available from Beatlefan, P.O. Box 33515, Decatur, GA 30033 for $1.25.) Christopher recently sent me some corrections to that article he wrote. They include the following: (1) the article states that Canawest and Artransa got the bulk of Beatle cartoon work. Wrong. It should be TVC-London (the studio that worked on YELLOW SUBMARINE) and Artransa. Canawest was called on to do episodes that TVC couldn't. (2) Paul Frees did the voices of John and GEORGE (not John and PAUL as stated in the article). Paul and Ringo were voiced by Lance Percival. (Lenburg's book lists him as "Percibal," but Jim LeFebvre, owner of a Beatles memorabilia shop in California, actually called Paul Frees and verified the voices and the spelling.) (3) During the final season when the Beatles cartoons were moved by ABC-TV to Sundays, the show was aired at 9:30 a.m. (EST) not noon as the article stated. Thanks, Christopher, for sharing those corrections with us.

THE FLINTSTONES SUE. Hanna-Barbera Productions has filed a thirty-five million dollar lawsuit against Columbia Pictures Inc. over the syndication of Hanna-Barbera's FLINTSTONES episodes. The suit claims a breach of contract because Columbia Pictures Television Distribution assigned the distribution of 166 half-hour episodes to Dancer-Fitzgerald-Sample and the resulting sale produced far less income than the real value for those episodes. Dancer-Fitzgerald-Sample (acting as the agent for General Mills) bought


CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
EPISODE 201: ©1981 Don Rosa
SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN
ENQUIRER
Newsweek
TIME
MAN OF THE YEAR
MONEY
Better Homes
SIGH... LOOK AT THIS SPREAD! AFTER 2 YEARS OF BEING UNKNOWN AND UNAPPRECIATED, NOW THIS! ONE EXTREME TO THE OTHER -- FROM THE RIDICULOUS TO THE SUBLIME.
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
CHOP CHOP CHOP CHOP
OH... SINCE IT BECAME KNOWN THAT MY BASE OF OPERATION IS HERE ATOP THE FIRST NATIONAL TOWER, MY NEW FAME IS PRECIPITATING MAIL DROPS ALL DAY LONG
DROP THE BAG AND LET'S GET OUTTA' HERE! C.K. IS QUITE A GUY BUT HE'S HELL ON HELICOPTERS!
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY!
SORRY TO BE SO SNEAKY... BUT CAN WE HAVE SOME INTERVIEWS?
UH... WELL, I HAVEN'T BEEN INTERVIEWED SINCE LUNCH --- FIRE AWAY.
RIP!
C.K.'S PRE-RECORDED SECRET MESSAGE: EVERYBODY LIKES TO PICK ON THE 'NATIONAL ENQUIRER', BUT HOW MANY OF US STILL READ MAGAZINES OF HIGHER INTEGRITY, BUT EQUALLY LOW INTELLIGENCE LEVEL, LIKE 'PEOPLE' OR US?
I'M WITH THE NEWSWORK TIMES: DID YOU KNOW THE PARS NEWS AGENCY IS CLAIMING YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOMBING OF THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER OF IRAN?
NATURALLY, I'D NEVER HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH SUCH AN ACT OF VIOLENCE!
HOWEVER, IF IRAN ABSOLUTELY INSISTS ON FINDING AN AMERICAN TO HOLD RESPONSIBLE, I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHERE THE LINE FORMS.
HEY, CAP - SO WHAT'S YOUR SECRET FOR A PRIMO SEX LIFE? ASTROLOGY? REINCARNATION? MIRACLE DIETS? DOPE? SAY-- WAIT - I JUST THOUGHT OF A HOT ANSWER?
LET ME GUESS: YOU'RE FROM THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER.
BUT YOU'LL EXCUSE ME NOW --- I'M DUE IN LOS ANGELES IN 15 MINUTES!
LATER
OCTA HEXA GLOP, YOU SAY? WOW! SOUNDS STRONGER THAN SOME OF THE JUNK THE BAND USES!
WELL, SINCE I'M IN A SIMULTANEOUS INTERVIEW ON ABC'S 'NIGHT LINE', I MUST BE OFF TO THE ABC STUDIOS ACROSS TOWN FOR THEIR NEXT QUESTION. I'LL BE BACK IN 10 SECONDS FOR YOUR NEXT QUERY.
HO-OOOH!
WELL? AREN'T YOU GOING???
OH... I'M ALREADY BACK! THEY WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF A COMMERCIAL.
FASTER THAN A SPEEDING MED FLY, EH, FOLKS?
A MED-FLY? YOU KNOW, .. THOSE LITTLE BUGS THAT--
FORGET IT.
PLEASE LAUGH!!



the FLINTSTONES episodes for twenty million dollars which covers a seven-year period with an option for an additional seven years. The episodes in question were produced by Hanna-Barbera between 1960 and 1966, and unlike all Hanna-Barbera product since then, is co-owned by Columbia, who distributed them.

COMING ATTRACTIONS. Now in post-production is a feature-length animated children's film entitled PETER-NO-TAIL by Stig Lasseby. It's being produced by the Swedish Film Institute (which also has films by Ingmar Bergman and Jan Troell ready for distribution).

NO CHRISTMAS FOR MICKY THIS YEAR. You may remember that I mentioned a while ago that during this season of Christmas cartoons we could expect yet another Christmas cartoon from ABC. It was to be called MICKY'S CHRISTMAS and was to be a half-hour adaptation by Mark Evanier of the story of a little twelve-year-old girl who treks across country to sell a huge Christmas tree to Rockefeller Center so her family can have a merry Christmas. Well, you won't see it this year. The people in charge of the story loved it so much that they wanted it expanded to an hour and then after that change was made the executives in charge thought it would make a nice ninety-minute live-action movie for TV. So what's the final verdict? The verdict this week is that it will remain as an hour-long animated special and will premiere on ABC in 1982.

MARVEL PRODUCTIONS. Larry Houston of Marvel Productions called to let me know he's trying to get the okay to handle all the publicity on Marvel Productions so that foul-ups don't occur like listing Iceman as a "new" character. Larry mentioned that even though Dave DePatie is still president of the company (after all, it was DePatie-Freleng not too long ago), Stan Lee is listed as the creative head and definitely has some clout. Recently, the networks gave Marvel Productions a title for a series they'd like developed so everyone sat around and was bouncing ideas off of good ol' Stan. "It's one of the best places to work at," commented Houston during our conversation, "There's no pressure and the politics aren't that heavy. Best of all, I'm drawing characters I grew up with!" (By the way, Houston contributed a lot more than you'd expect on that recent SPIDER-MAN episode featuring Swarm, and Houston may end up getting credit for writing scripts before the next season.)

LEE MENDELSON IS ON THE MOVE. Lee Mendelson, executive producer of the CHARLIE BROWN specials, has several new animated projects of interest. This Thanksgiving will be NO MAN'S VALLEY, a Lee Mendelson-Phil Howort production. This new animated program is based on "a group of Dutch characters that represent the endangered and extinct species." Mendelson is also developing an animated adaptation of Jim Davis's GARFIELD. Also working on this project is Bill Melendez, who has been responsible for all the PEANUTS specials. GARFIELD is set to be shown this coming spring. Three new CHARLIE BROWN specials are also coming this season, bringing the total of the PEANUTS shows up to twenty-five. The new CHARLIE BROWN specials include the following: SOMEDAY YOU'LL FIND HER, CHARLIE BROWN; A CHARLIE BROWN CELEBRATION; and a third as yet untitled effort. CELEBRATION will feature animation of what's judged to be the five funniest series of newspaper strips to appear in PEANUTS history. By the way, it's the first hour-long CHARLIE BROWN special.

MIKE MALTESE HONORED. The late Mike Maltese, writer for Warner Bros. cartoons among other accomplishments, was honored at a screening of some of his films at the Nuart Theater in Los Angeles on September 22, 1981. In attendance were Bill Hanna, Hugh Harman, Rudolf Ising, Bob Clampett, Bill Melendez, Hal Geer and Friz Freleng.

WOODY WOODPECKER MAKES COMEBACK. You may have noticed a lot of Woody Woodpecker merchandise appearing recently. Just last month, Microcommunications Corp. introduced a Woody Woodpecker phone. The company is betting that "there are more Woody Woodpecker fans out there than Mickey Mouse fans" because Woody's cartoons are still being shown on 109 television stations and in 68 foreign countries. That same philosophy seems to have invaded the other areas of character merchandizing, so expect to see a lot more Woody material on the shelves this Christmas. Walter Lantz, by the way, is still alive and is eighty-one years young.

THE RETURN OF BAKSHI. In order to support his new 12,000 square-foot shop in Sunland, California, Ralph Bakshi says his company will get involved in producing live-action as well as animation for television. His three-picture deal with Columbia Pictures is still on, but he says he isn't obligated to "put a film into production just to make a commitment." Bakshi's company is currently working on FIRE AND ICE (which was originally titled DORN).

THE RETURN OF THE BEAR. Some fans may remember the DePatie-Fre-

leng Christmas special, THE BEAR WHO SLEPT THROUGH CHRISTMAS. Rick Reinert Productions, who did the book adapting that adventure as well as animating some public service announcements, were going to produce a sequel to that special called THE GREAT BEAR SCARE (involving Ted E. Bear at Halloween). But the producers who own the character were unable to get it sold to a network for a Halloween showing, so Reinert Productions shut down work on it with hopes of completing it early next year for a 1982 airdate. Reinert Productions is basically a three-man operation (Rick Reinert, Dave Bennett and Ennis McNulty) and they've recently moved into newer quarters.

KEEP THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING. Thanks again to the many folks who sent cards, letters, clippings, etc. with information for this column. Remember, you can contact me at: JIM KORKIS, 707 WEST DORAN, GLENDALE, CA 91203.

Obituary

Comicdom lost one of the most influential guiding lights of comic book history when Wallace Wood was discovered dead after having shot himself November 2nd. He was 54. He had been very ill for a long while and had recently moved to California to recover. The day he was found he had been scheduled to be hooked up to a kidney dialysis machine. His vision was very poor and the small hotel room he was living in had three pieces of furniture and no drawing board, although he had come west under the auspices of BANG magazine. He was cremated, his ashes spread over the ocean.

Wood was born June 17, 1927 in Menahga, Minnesota, and lived in most of the midwestern and eastern states at one time or another, working at odd jobs before joining the Merchant Marines and paratroopers during World War II. He attended the New York Cartoonists and Illustrators School and the Minneapolis School of Art, and broke into comics as a letterer circa 1947. Since that time, he worked at virtually every publishing house as a letterer, artist, inker, writer and art director. His comic book credits include: Avon, EC, Fox, Ziff-Davis, Youthful, Quality, Trojan, ACG, Pines, Atlas, Star, ME, Lev Gleason, (the pre-code era); Charlton, Harvey, DC, Marvel, Tower, Gold Key, King, Archie, Wham-O and Seaboard-Atlas as well as Warren. Syndicated strips he contributed to include: THE SPIRIT section, SKY MASTERS, JIM HUNTER, FLASH GORDON, TERRY AND THE PIRATES, BUCKY'S CHRISTMAS CAPER, and PRINCE VALIANT, as well as the adult comic strips SALLY FORTH and CANNON for the OVERSEAS WEEKLY. He contributed illustrations to science fiction magazines such as GALAXY and was involved with HUMBUG, TRUMP, PANIC, WITZEND (as publisher) and the earliest MAD Magazines. He served as prime mover and art director for Tower Comics from 1965-67, the only instance in which Wood was able to write as well as draw or ink his own comic book work on a regular basis. He had recently been involved in the publication of his sketchbooks with Bill Crouch, as well as the publication of his longtime project, originally conceived as an animated cartoon, WIZARD KING.

Wood's influence as a storyteller and designer was immense, with many artists directly influenced by his intricate and delicate rendering of machinery as well as his disarmingly simple renditions of the human figure. Among his assistants were Joe Orlando, Dan Adkins, Wayne Howard, Nicola Cuti, Bill Pearson, and Tim Battersby Brent. Wood's ex-wife, Tatjana, currently colors covers for DC.

Warren Coming Comics

EERIE No. 129, February. [12/15]

FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND No. 181, February. [12/15]

THE ROOK No. 13, February. [12/15]

CREEPY No. 135, February. [12/22]

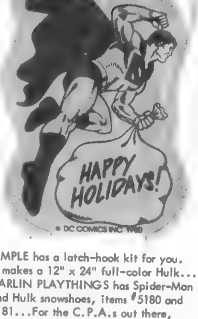
1994 No. 23, February. [12/22]

VAMPIRELLA No. 103, February. [12/22]

Comics Extras

By Ron Massengill

The Christmas season has brought a new batch of toys and related items with super-hero themes: BUDDY L has a Spider-Man set consisting of a Spider-motorcycle, car, van and helicopter. These are made of heavy metal and are well-painted. There is also a Captain America set...A.H.I. has the following three-function radio-controlled boats: Spider-Man, Batman and Captain America...For the young (three to seven) fixer-upper on your Christmas list, DURHAM has the Hulk Workbench with tools...If you like to work with your hands at simple things the SEW



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SIMPLE has a latch-hook kit for you. It makes a 12" x 24" full-color Hulk... CARLIN PLAYTHINGS has Spider-Man and Hulk snowshoes, items #5180 and 5181...For the C.P.A.s out there, NASTA has pencil tops in the shape of Spider-Man and Hulk's heads...For people who like to paint and modify unpainted one-inch blown-cast metal figures, then CITADEL of England has something for you. They have released

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seven new figures: Male Heroes, Male Cloaked Heroes, Super-Heroines, Cloaked Super-Heroines, Armored Heroes, Special Agents and Adventurers. (I want to thank Brian Murphy for the above information.) Archive Miniatures also has a number of miniature figures that can be modified into your favorite super-hero, barbarian, duck or movie character...SUPERMAN TO THE RESCUE is a new Golden Book 24 page paint book, with paints included, illustrated by Rodin Rodriguez and Joe Orlando...To wrap everything up, from CLEO WRAP comes super-hero wrapping paper featuring DC heroes. Also from CLEO come stand-up "Tag-Ons" (shown)...I want to thank Gerald Duet for being such a faithful collector. Thanks. Happy Holiday Season to one and all.

Comics History

THE BACK-SEAT SUPER-HEROES
By Lou Mougin

Picture it: 1966. It was the year that the Vietnam conflict became America's first televised war. The Beatles made their last tour and the British invasion waned. Hippies, draft-dodgers, the drug-scene, student protests and Haight-Ashbury first shocked the Middle-American consciousness. Above all, it was a year of CHANGE.

And undoubtedly, being a comic collector you form a four-color, action-packed, larger-than-life picture of the most-well known media figure of the year: Batman.

There is no need to recap the Bat-Fad here. Most of the readers of this article have been thoroughly steeped in it and have logged at least two years of solid viewing of the TV show. But there was one major consequence of the Batman craze: it brought the comic book-hero into the public consciousness.

Suddenly, comics had been discovered by the trendy. They were declared Pop Art, in an era when Pop was king, and the twelve-cent heroes were actually accorded serious intellectual consideration. DC wound up with the world's hottest property and dealt him out in heavy doses. Five books a month (with the Batman logo featured very prominently where it had not been before), a newspaper strip, a feature movie, paperback reprints, volumes of magazine and newspaper articles, tons of products, and, of course, the twice-weekly TV show. All bore the name of the New Culture Hero, Batman.

Within the last twenty years, 1966 and 1967 were the financial high-spots for comics publishers. Inevitably, publishers looked upon the super-hero, found him profitable, and said "Let there be more!" And Marvel and DC, the two titans of the super-hero game, were suddenly besieged in early 1966 by company after company, turning out battalions of super-heroes. Some of these publishers entered the comics business for the first time. Others hastily converted from funny-characters to costumed crimefighters. All told, about a half-dozen new contenders jockeyed for space on the newsstand.

Tower Books, a major paperback publisher, anticipated the comic boom and entered the field in late 1965. Archie Comics also saw the trend shaping up, revamped their sole remaining hero (The Fly), and revived almost every single hero they had in their '40s file. Harvey released a series of five books, each of which lasted three issues and then died unceremoniously. Charlton made major revisions by hiring one of their artists, Dick Giordano, as editor, and forcing out their old heroes to make room for new ones. A new outfit, Lightning, attempted to "strike twice" by hiring Captain Marvel's old creators for a new feature. Dell made a feeble entry by putting Frankenstein, Dracula and the Wolfman in costumes and declaring them super-heroes. And a company called M.F. Enterprises, whose name could only be found if you took a microscope and searched the indicia on page 5, did an entirely new version of Captain Marvel. (Which, of course, is running neck-and-neck with Charlton's old Blue Beetle for the title "Worst Super-hero Ever.")

The comics boom caused by the Batman TV show initiated new heroes which were dependent on the camp fad for their lifeblood. They were born simultaneously in late 1965 or 1966 and died quickly when the fad had run its course in 1968. The small publishers clutched after lifelines as soon as BATMAN's ratings began to sink.

The camp fad marked the end of the first era of '60s comics, which GAVE us most of the heroes still with us today, and ushered in the third era in 1968, which REFINED them. The early '60s were characterized by the first FANTASTIC FOUR, SPIDER-MAN, THOR and HULK comics, the DC JUSTICE LEAGUE amalgam of heroes, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Carmine Infantino and Gardner Fox. The late '60s were a time of furious experimentation and refinement, which gave us Steranko's SHIELD, Ditko's CREEPER, the downfall of Gardner Fox and concurrent rise of Denny O'Neil, the "arrivals" of Roy Thomas and Neal Adams, and the 35-cent SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN book.

But the middle-sixties were another era altogether. "Back-seat super-heroes," as Jim Steranko dubbed them, were unable to match the super-star status of Marvel and DC creations. Some were definitely of high quality and deserved continuation. Others were barely worth a three-issue bombout. In this five-part series, we'll examine the heroes of each major publisher in turn. Beginning at the top, we will work our way down.

And Tower Comics was definitely at the top...

* * *

1. A SOUND OF THUNDER

T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS #1, dated November 1965, hit the ground running. With a 25-cent, 64-page package of six superbly-drawn tightly-plotted stories, the book packed in three new super-heroes, a horde of secret agents, mystery men, super-villains, monsters and action, action, action! One look at the book and the reader could tell that here, indeed, was the king of the backseat comics; it was the only mid-sixties title to successfully compete with Marvel and DC super-hero fare. It set the pace for two years of giant-sized comics that most fans of that period recall as fondly as anything from the two major publishers.

Basically, Tower Comics, which published THUNDER and the several spin-offs, boiled down to one person: Wally Wood. As creator of the series, major artist and writer and self-admitted free-lance editor, Wood produced his best commercial comics work of the sixties while at Tower. The nearly two-dozen books he worked on during the 1966-68 period showcase some of the finest super-hero art of the Second Heroic Age, particularly his numerous Dynamo stories. As a result, Tower became the only third-force publisher to equal, and at times, SURPASS Marvel and DC in art quality. Others who wielded the pencil and brush at Tower were equally renowned: Gil Kane, Reed Crandall, Steve Ditko, Dan Adkins, John Giunta, Al Williamson. Few super-hero books would ever boast such a distinguished crew.

"I was not only Tower's top artist, I created the characters, and wrote most of the THUNDER AGENTS stories," admitted Wood. "As to why Harry Shorten [head of Tower Books] decided to publish comics, I don't know. But he came to me and asked me to work up a super-hero book. I then functioned as a free-lance editor and did as much of the art as I could."

The concept of THUNDER was a skillful blending of two separate genres that had each, in 1965, been proven sure-fire successes. Secret agents had ridden a wave of popularity since the first James Bond films of the early '60s, and the Bond/Flint/Solo cult was never bigger. (The popularity of THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. in particular seemed to have the greatest impact on this book.) And super-heroes were the rage in comic books; that went without saying. Well, then, why not a cloak and dagger type who wore a costume beneath the cloak?

That line of thinking resulted in THUNDER AGENTS #1. The cover, drawn by Wood, introduced a triad of new arrivals to the super-hero biz: a blue-clad Superman-type lifted an armored villain overhead, surrounded by a complex of machinery. He was flanked by a cloaked, transparent man on his left, and on the right was a late-comer who apparently had ripped off the Atom's uniform. The cover, colored only in various shades of red, blue, and yellow and devoid of any blurbs, was perhaps less flashy than it should have been. Compared to Marvel's slam-bang broadsides of the period, it looked positively static. But it served to showcase Dynamo, NoMan and Menthor for their first public appearance. And the greatest backseaters of the mid-sixties were

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WEDNESDAY,	DECEMBER 9TH	1 - 6 P.M.
THURSDAY,	DECEMBER 10TH	2 - 8 P.M.
FRIDAY,	DECEMBER 11TH	2 - 8 P.M.
SATURDAY,	DECEMBER 12TH	12-6 P.M.

born!

Page one opened with a battlefield scene as we glimpsed a squad of landing UN paratroopers through shattered glass. A caption informed us: "A team of special U.N. agents lands at a remote mountain lab..." In the space of two pages we learned that the unit was on a rescue mission, intent on saving the life of Dr. Emil Jennings, the greatest scientist of the Western world. As fate would have it, the bad guys escaped unharmed in a helicopter, and Jennings was cold meat on his laboratory floor.

"This has to be the work of the Warlord!" muttered a squad leader.

"Just who is this Warlord, sir?" asked a soldier, thus allowing us to be introduced to the villain of the piece. The Warlord proves to be the mysterious leader of a SPECTRE or THRUSH-like organization, with every available criminal and spy at his beck and call. His objective: the theft of every scientific development on earth. Masked by a purple hood, the weird spy-chief held congress only with his top lieutenants, and not even they had seen his true features. "Now he's gotten to this experimental station and our most advanced research, and since the professor never kept notes, all these devices will be his sole property...we can never duplicate them!" finishes the officer.

"They didn't have time to get everything, sir," says another crewman. "Look at these!"

The scene immediately shifts to a high-level conference room in New York. A wall is decorated with a figure of the Western Hempisphere and the words, "The Higher United Nations Defense Enforcement Reserves."

THUNDER's Inner Council stands assembled, considering the three recovered devices from Jennings' laboratory...a metallic belt, a blue-black cloak, and a rigid helmet in the form of a headmask. "The first is an electron molecular intensifier belt which will make the wearer's body structure change to the consistency of steel!" says a speaker, holding up the belt. Next, he gestures to the cape, and explains its ability of becoming absolutely black, reflecting no light and rendering the wearer invisible. "And this one we're not sure of," he says, fondling the strange helmet. "It seems to be a cybernetic helmet...it could be dangerous, but it could amplify a man's brain power many times over..."

Quickly, the heads of the free world's greatest semi-secret defensive organization come to an agreement. A full-scale assault must be led against the Warlord, spearheaded by three agents who will employ the inventions of Dr. Jennings against the man who ordered his murder. "...And so the search begins," read the final caption.

The four-page introductory sequence fairly breathed cliches, from the doomed scientist who creates super-heroes to the opposed agencies locked in global cold-war conflict. But the plot was solid, the concepts didn't stretch reality to the breaking point, and, of course, Wood's art pulled the entire thing together. It set several concepts that THUNDER would follow to their final issue: tight, pulp-like plotting, an economy of dialogue (word balloons were kept to two per panel most of the time) and believability. The THUNDER Agents, rather than gaining power from radioactive spiders or gamma bomb explosions, were human beings whose abilities were augmented by mechanical devices. It was a welcome touch of conservatism in a comics universe already top-heavy with sorcerers, omnipotent entities, parallel dimensions and heroes with every super-power conceivable.

THUNDER's biggest blockbuster was introduced two pages later with a one-page Wood splash panel. The blue-and-white clad figure from the front cover grimly towered over a pile of rubble, hands on hips. Behind him was a hole he had made in a brick wall at least two feet thick. Dynamo was unleashed!

Tower's steely superman was originally dubbed "Thunderbolt," but a last-minute change substituted the name "Dynamo" instead and his new name was lettered over the old one. (Cf. the reprint of page 10, panel 2 in the Dynamo paperback, where the caption reads, "Even Thunderbolt's iron frame is shaken by the concussion...") Undoubtedly, Charlton, whose Thunderbolt debuted a short time later, was grateful for the change.

The twelve-page origin story was scripted by Len Brown and drawn by Wood, and opened with a waist-shot of Our Hero as a desk-bound administration official in THUNDER H.Q. An obvious secret identity type you could recognize at twenty paces. "This paperwork isn't for me!" he muses. "I'm afraid I made a mistake when I accepted this job!"

Suddenly, his superior enters the room. "LEONARD BROWN, will you come with me, please?"

(How's about them apples? The above is the only case I can find in comics history in which a scripter named a major super-hero HIMSELF! But, after all, Leonard Brown is at least as believable a monicker as Clark Kent or Peter Parker, so it was allowed to stand.)

Unsuspectingly, Len Brown follows his guide through several checkpoints to Level Seven, the meeting place of THUNDER's Inner Council. Confronted by a semi-circle of the West's top spy-chiefs, he is offered a chance at becoming an agent, and, in the best comic-book hero tradition, accepts.

One panel later, Brown is stripped down to blue trunks and boots and offered Jennings' blue metal belt with the strange dial in the buckle position. "Because of your physical stamina, you've been selected to use the Thunderbelt," says one attendant. "It will change your body's atomic structure," explains another. "Put it on!" (Tower was never noted for excess dialogue, as you can tell.)

After allowing the belt time to adapt itself to his metabolism, Brown turns the dial. Abruptly, a surge of electrical discharges bathe him in blue fire as the energy released rends the air with a spectacular CR-RACK! Shades of Captain Marvel!! It was obviously derivative of the Big Red Cheese, and just as fun in 1965 as in 1940. With a weight of over 1000 pounds, and a density approximating that of titanium steel, Len Brown was set up to become THUNDER's first super-agent.

The attendants instruct Brown to take a poke at a wall target with an impact gauge attached. "Okay...here goes. I'll probably wind up breaking my hand...WHA...!?"

KRUMF!

One panel later, Brown steps into the adjoining office through the hole he has just made in the wall. Instant super-hero!

In the final steps of the super-hero ritual, Brown is informed of the necessary Achilles Heel: that prolonged use of the belt can so drain his physical energy as to be fatal. (In later stories, the belt would be outfitted with a timer to turn itself off after a half-hour had passed.) The brown-haired Brown is provided with a blue-and-white costume of metallic fabric and dubbed "Dynamo," for obvious reasons. And none too soon...for, at the bottom of the page, the Warlord strikes again!

A pair of armored trucks proceeds to blanket New York City under a dense fog composed of iron particles (?). Under cover of the mist, teams of armor-clad raiders stage snatch-and-grab raids of radioactive materials. At this point, the reader first glimpses Dynamo's longest-lived ally and adversary...the Iron Maiden, Tower's version of the Dragon Lady.

A beautiful redhead who wore a suit of gleaming metal that hugged her curves like a body-suit, the Iron Maiden played Catwoman to Dynamo's Batman. In over nine separate clashes with THUNDER's big blue blockbuster, she represented the ultimate and unattainable love interest; by issue #4, she was as much smitten by Dynamo as he with her, yet she steadfastly refused to let it get in the way of her criminal career. One must, indeed, admire such dedication. Besides, it kept her coming back time and time again when most other villains usually made one-

Tower Comics Index

The Tower Comics line was published by Harry Shorten and edited by Wally Wood and Sam Schwartz. Writers for specific stories are not known, but contributing writers include Wally Wood, Len Brown, Larry Ivie, Bill Pearson, Gil Kane, Ruts Jones, Roger Brand and Tim Battersby-Brent.

The following index was adapted freely from one originally compiled for APA-I by Gene Reed.

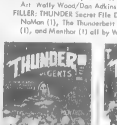
AMAZING HEROES #5 and 6 reported that John V. Carbonaro has licensed the rights to the Tower characters and plans to release a new THUNDER AGENTS Magazine in November as the first in a new quarterly series. The black and white magazine will cost $2.00 and have slick covers, with Dynamo, NoMan and Lightning revived in the first issue, and plans to do the same for Raven and a new version of Menthor. Writers would include Carmonaro, Pat Gabrielle, Mark Texiera, Louis Manno and David Singer, with art by Texiera, Manno, Denys Cowan and inkers Gabriele and the only original Tower contributor, Frank Giacoia.

T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS

1, November 1965 Cover: Wally Wood
**THUNDER Agents "First Encounter" (4)
Art: Wally Wood
Dynamo "Menace of the Iron Fog" (12)
Art: Wally Wood Story: Len Brown
NoMan "THUNDER Agent NoMan" (10)
Art: Reed Crandall (with Wally Wood)
Menthor "The Enemy Within" (12)
Art: Gil Kane/Mike Esposito (pages 2-7 pencilled by George Tuska)
THUNDER Squad "THUNDER Squad" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
Dynamo "At the Mercy of the Iron Maiden" (10)
Art: Wally Wood
FILLER: text (2)

2, January 1966 Cover: Wally Wood
**Dynamo "Dynamo Battles Dynevac" (13)
Art: Wally Wood
NoMan "Is The Warlord's Power" (10)
Art: Chic Stone/Wally Wood
Menthor "Menthor" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
Dynamo "D-Day For Dynamo" (13)
Art: Wally Wood
THUNDER Squad "On The Double" (10)*
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
FILLER: "Junior THUNDER Agents" (text) (2) Illustration by Mike Sekowsky

3, March 1966 Cover: Wally Wood
Dynamo "Dynamo Battles the Subterraneans" (10)
Art: Wally Wood
NoMan "NoMan Faces the Threat of the Amazing Vibraman" (10)
Art: John Giunta/Wally Wood
Dynamo "The Red Dragon" (10)
Art: Wally Wood/Dan Adkins, Tim Batt-- by
THUNDER Squad "Invaders From the Deep" (12)
Art: Mike Sekowsky, Frank Giacoia
**Dynamo and Menthor "Dynamo Vs. Menthor (10)
Art: Wally Wood/Dan Adkins
FILLER: THUNDER Secret File Dossiers on: Dynamo (1) NoMan (1), The Thunderbirds (1), THUNDER Squad (1), and Menthor (1) all by Wally Wood; letters (2)



4, April 1966 Cover: Wally Wood
Dynamo "Master of Evolut-- (12)
Art: Wally Wood
NoMan "The Synth-- Stu-dent" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
THUNDER Agents "The Deadly Dust" (10)
(Introduction of Lightning)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
**Dynamo "The Return of the Iron Maiden" (10)
Art: Reed Crandall/Wally Wood
Menthor "The Great Hypno" (11)
Art: John Giunta/Dan Adkins
FILLER: NoMan In Action (1) and "The Origin of THUNDER" (1) Dan Adkins; letters (2)

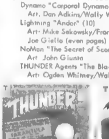
5, June 1966 Covers: Wally Wood
Dynamo "Dynamo and the Golem" (10)
Art: Reed Crandall/Wally Wood
NoMan "In The Caverns of Deno" (10)
Art: Gil Kane/Wally Wood
Lightning "Return of Baron Von Kampf" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
Menthor "Menthor Vs. The Entrancer" (10)
Art: John Giunta
**THUNDER Agents "Double For Dynamo" (14)
Art: Wally Wood
FILLER: Lightning (1) Wally Wood; letters (2)

6, July 1966, Cover: Wally Wood
Dynamo "Dynamo and the Sinister Agents of the Red Star" (14) Art: Wally Wood
Lightning "The Origin of the Warp Wizard" (11)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
**THUNDER Agents" THUNDER Vs. Deno" (10)
Art: John Giunta/Wally Wood
Menthor "The Carnival of Death" (10)
Art: John Giunta/Ray Bailey (?)
NoMan "To Fight Alone" (10)
Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER. none

7, August 1966 Cover: Wally Wood
Dynamo "Wanted: Leonard Brown, Code Name 'Dynamo' Suspicion of Treason" (10) Art: Wally Wood
Lightning "The Warp Wizard's Revenge" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
THUNDER Agents "Subterranean Showdown" (10)
Art: George Tuska
**NoMan "To Be Or Not to Be" (10)
Art: John Giunta/Sal Trapani
Menthor "A Matter of Life and Death" (10)
Art: Steve Ditko/Wally Wood
FILLER: The Iron Maiden (1) Wally Wood; letters (2)

8, September 1966 Covers: Wally Wood
Dynamo "Thunder In the Dark" (10)
Art: Wally Wood
NoMan "The Pyramid of the Warlords" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Joe Giella
Lightning "The Blue Aliens" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
Raven "Enter... The Raven" (10)*
Art: George Tuska
**THUNDER Agents "Final Encounter" (11)
Art Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
FILLER: The Overlord of the Subterranean World (10) Wally Wood; letters (2)

9, October 1966 Covers: John Giunta/Wally Wood
Dynamo "Conquest Dynamo, U.S.A." (10)
Art. Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
Lightning "Ander" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia (odd pages), Joe Giella (even pages)
NoMan "The Secret of Scorpion Island" (10)
Art: John Giunta
THUNDER Agents "The Black Box of Doom" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney/Wally Wood



-Raven "Raven Battles Mayven The Poet" (11)
Art: Manny Stallman
FILLER: letters (2)

10, November 1966 Cover: Al Williamson/Wally Wood
**Dynamo "Operation Armageddon" (10)
Art: Wally Wood
Lightning "The Air Laser" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Joe Giella (odd pages)/Frank Giacoia (even pages)
NoMan/Andor "Three Deeds of Evil" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
THUNDER Agents "Kitten or Killer?" (10)
Art: George Tuska
Raven "The Return of Mayven" (10)
Art: Manny Stallman
FILLER: letters (2)

11, March 1967 Covers Wally Wood
Dynamo "The Death of Dynamo" (10)
Art: Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
Lightning "Lightning Vs.. The Vortex" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
NoMan "The Trap" (10)
Art: John Giunta
**THUNDER Agents "Understudy For Dynamo" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
Raven "The Case of Jacob Elsinam" (10)
Art: Manny Stallman
FILLER: letters (2)

12, April 1967 Covers: Wally Wood
Dynamo "Strength Is Not Enough" (10)
Art: Steve Ditko/Wally Wood
Lightning "Speed Demon" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
NoMan "The Rock" (10)
Art: John Giunta
**THUNDER Agents "The Road to Spider HQ" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
Raven "The Raven Battles The Storm Troopers of Xochimilca" (10) Art: Manny Stallman
FILLER: letters (2)

13, June 1967 Covers: Wally Wood
Dynamo "A' Bullet For Dynamo" (10)
Art: Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
NoMan "Escape From Destiny" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
Lightning "The Quick and the Changing" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
**THUNDER Agents "The Black Helmet" (10)
Art: George Tuska
Undersea Agent "The Second Atlantis" (10)
Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2)

14, July 1967 Cover: Gil Kane
Dynamo/Andor "Return Engagement" (10)
Art: Steve Ditko/Wally Wood
Lightning "To Fight Is To Die" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
NoMan "On The Other Side" (10)
Art: John Giunta
**Raven "Daily Sees The Prophet" (10)
Story: Gil Kane Art: Gil Kane
THUNDER Agents "The Fist of Zeus" (10)
Art: George Tuska
FILLER: letters (2)

15, September 1967 Cover: Gil Kane
Dynamo/Andor "Collision Course" (10)
Art: Wally Wood
Lightning "While Our Hero Sleeps..." (8)
Art: Chic Stone
**NoMan "Starflight to the Assassin Planet" (12)
Art: Ogden Whitney
Dynamo "Hail to the Chief" (10)
Art: John Giunta/Wally Wood
Weed "Dig We Must" (10)
Art: George Tuska
FILLER: "NoMan In Action" (1) Dan Adkins from THUNDER AGENTS #2; NoMan dossier (1) Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #2

shot appearances. But in this first clash, Iron Maiden was more hellcat than harlequin.

In the meantime, Dynamo is dispatched to rid the city of the fog (which he does) and capture the raiders (one out of two isn't bad). The four-page fight looked like a 1942 Siegel and Shuster SUPERMAN outing; Dynamo merrily demolished a truck, shed bullets like peanut shells, bounced back from a grenade explosion and took on the Iron Maiden's metal-clad thugs, only to be beaten when his power drain forced him to turn off the Thunderbelt. Dynamo is captured and taken to the Warlord's island, where the Iron Maiden prepares to dope the secret of his belt out of him. Part One ends with Dynamo in chains, to be resolved in the last story of the issue.

In the main, Dynamo did bear resemblances to an early Golden Age Superman figure. He was powerful and as durable as a tank, but never invulnerable. Adventure after adventure ended up with a scene of his hospital bed, where he recuperated; he was hospitalized three times in one month alone. Moreover, Dynamo carried a spirit of boyish buffoonery into his stories: he was FUN. Never bested in battle, Len Brown would regularly report in for a ritual chewing-out by the Chief, a combination of Perry White and J. Jonah Jameson and one of the funniest Big Boss caricatures of that period. In one particularly funny ending, Dynamo's mother called up the Chief to complain about the way he was treating her little boy! After Dynamo nervously phoned back to beg his mother to please, PLEASE never do that again, he received a familiar tap on the shoulder. "There you are, Brown. Step into my office, please..." Brown, about as effective with girls as Captain Marvel, fumblingly carried on a love interest with the strip ingenue, Alice Robbins, the boss's secretary. More than anything else, Dynamo was the picture of the Junior Executive Super-Hero. It was Tower's most entertaining strip, and Dynamo rated several stories per issue in the earliest and latest THUNDERs, besides spinning off into four issues of his own book.

Dynamo was backed up in THUNDER AGENTS by Tower's number two superstar, who debuted immediately after him in issue #1. In the "android hero" department, Tower beat the Vision and the Red Tornado to the punch by more than three years. Enter the Android Agent... NoMan!

The blue-skinned humanoid with the darkened eyesockets was another Wood creation, introduced in his initial story with art by Reed Crandall. Without a doubt, NoMan was one of the unique super-heroes of his time, and became their most fully-rounded character as well.

In the origin story, Dr. Anthony Dunn volunteers to have his mind transfered into an android body he created jointly with the late, lamented Dr. Jennings. Dunn, as we first see him, is the diametric opposite of Dynamo: an aged, infirm, balding scientist bound to a wheelchair. He may have been the most unlikely alter ego ever considered for a super-hero. Dunn gives up human existence a page later to enter a synthetic body. "For the first time in years I feel young and strong!"

The catch was, Dunn had more than one body at his disposal. In fact, he had an ARMY of mass-produced androids, each of which he could transfer his mind-essence into at will. Whenever one body was destroyed, he just shuttled his mind into a new one. This led to the cliche of having him killed at least ONCE each issue, but as cliche's go, it was pretty unusual! (Once, when his last spare was destroyed, his line was, "If they kill me now I'm dead!") This power was augmented by the invisibility cloak of Dr. Jennings. "From now on, call me No-Man," he declared on page three. It fit.

The rest of the story pitted NoMan against Demo, "the Warlord's most formidable underworld agent," who commanded an army of simian "sub-men." The fight that ensued allowed NoMan to strut his stuff by defeating the caveman gang, using his invisibility cloak, and transferring to another body when Demo shot him in the chest. While he made his way to the scene of the crime in his new corpus, the villains took it on the lam. The pattern was set for all of NoMan's subsequent adventures.

THUNDER's synthetic super-hero was the least derivative of the entire lot. Naturally, the gimmick of placing a human mind in an artificial body had been around at least as long as Frankenstein, and had a clear pair of genre antecedants in DC's two versions of Robotman, but NoMan was clearly not a copy. And he soon gained the best characterization of the THUNDER cabal as writers began to play up the psychic crisis of adjusting to life in a non-human body. (Oddly enough, nobody in the series except NoMan seemed to notice the difference! To Dynamo, Menthor and Lightning, he was just "one of the boys.")

NoMan's character was subtly hinted at in several issues -- in particular, issue #4, when he aided a pretty blonde and gave thought to being human again -- but the understated tensions finally came to a head in #7's "To Be Or Not To Be." This story was one of the few Tower pieces that centered on character development rather than good-guy-vs.-bad-guy plot. NoMan rebelled against his own android identity, and against THUNDER, which he held responsible for creating it. He recklessly drove his excess bodies on a suicide binge around the world. Trying to fit into human society again, NoMan even proposed marriage to a girl. She turned him down, not because of his android form, but for his failure to face life's realities. NoMan subsequently became involved in a plot to destroy his remaining spare bodies, only to realize his error, turn on his co-plotters and rejoin THUNDER. As NoMan prepared for a space mission at the end of a ten-paper, he mused, "The only thing I regret is Trudy...I guess it WAS impossible... but whatever I am, my soul has a destiny as valid as any...and I must play out the role I've chosen." It was about as close to a statement of the human condition as Tower ever got, and the blue-skinned android became Tower's most three-dimensional figure as a result.

As THUNDER's number two hero in popularity, NoMan earned a two-issue try-out in his own magazine and rated one story per issue in THUNDER AGENTS right up to #19, the last non-reprint issue. He was cover-featured more times than any other character except Dynamo. The offbeat character of his strip accomodated weirder villains than his fellows, such as aliens, a reincarnated Egyptian princess, and a number of mad scientist types. Besides Reed Crandall, who handled the first three issues, Gil Kane, Steve Ditko, Ogden Whitney, John Giunta, Mike Sekowsky, Wally Wood, and Paul Reinman lent their artistic hands to NoMan's adventures.

The third member of THUNDER's triad debuted in the next story, with pencils by Gil Kane and George Tuska and inks by Mike Esposito. MENTHOR appeared in a Jack Kirby pose, legs four feet apart and on the verge of throwing a haymaker. Since Kane was also drawing the Atom at the time, the similarity in their costuming was made even more evident. And, strangely enough, THUNDER's third hero started his career as a TRAITOR.

"The Enemy Within" introduced John Janus, whiz-kid applicant, who passed THUNDER's initiation exams with the highest scores ever. (Janus: "This is child's play!" Other applicant: "You have to be a genius to answer these questions!") On the side, he moonlighted for the Warlord as a double agent. (In this story, the Warlord wore a green headmask and had a human face!) His assignment: shut down the defenses in THUNDER H.Q. preparatory to an invasion. Meanwhile, when the Council seeks volunteers for a test of Jennings' mysterious cybernetic helmet, Janus plays apple-polisher by offering himself. Not only did the blue-mask device endow him with psychokinetic power, it also changed Janus's personality, making him a staunch supporter of THUNDER. (Initially, whenever he

16, October 1967 Cover: Wally Wood
Dynamo/Andor "Dream of Doom" (10)
Art: Steve Ditko
NoMan "One of Our Androids Is Missing" (10)
Art: Gil Kane/Jack Abel (inks pages 1–5)
Lightning "The Whirling" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
THUNDER Agents "The End of the THUNDER Agents?" (10) Art: George Tuska
**Dynamo "A Slight Case of Combat Fatigue" (10)
Art: Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
FILLER: letters 12

17, December 1967 Cover: Dan Adkins
THUNDER Agents "First Encounter" (4)
Art: Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #1
Dynamo "Return of the Hyena" (10)
Art: Wally Wood
**NoMan "The Locusts Are Coming" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
Weed "Weed Out West" (10)
Art: George Tuska
Dynamo "Put Them All Together They Spell S.P.I.D.E.R." (10) Art: Chic Stone
FILLER: none

18, September 1968 Cover: Reed Crandall (story splash page)
Dynamo "Dynamo and the Amazing Mr. Mek" (10)
Art: Steve Ditko
NoMan "The Sinister Schemes of Professor Reverso" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
**Dynamo "The Arena" (10)
Art: Reed Crandall
Dynamo "Secret of the Abominable Snowmen" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
Heather "A Matter of Life and Death" (10)
Art: Steve Ditko/Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #2
FILLER: "NoMan In Action" (1) Dan Adkins from THUNDER AGENTS #4 (again)

19, November 1968 Cover: Vignettes from #7, 8, 14 and 16 by Wally Wood and Gil Kane
Dynamo "Half An Hour of Power" (10)
Art: Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
Dynamo "Dynamo Vs. The Ghost" (10)
Art: Paul Reinman
Dynamo "All-Girl Gang" (10)
Art: George Tuska
NoMan "A Matter of Transmitters" (10)
Art: Paul Reinman
Lightning "Speed Demon" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia from THUNDER AGENTS #12
FILLER: Dynamo dossier (1) Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #3

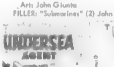
20, November 1969 Cover: Chic Stone
Frantis (1) Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #3,4
**Dynamo "The Origin of THUNDER Agent Dynamo" (6)
Art: Chic Stone
Dynamo "The Return of the Iron Maiden" (10)
Art: Reed Crandall/Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #4
NoMan "NoMan Faces the Threat of the Amazing Vibraman" (10) Art: John Giunta/Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #3
THUNDER Squad "The Deadly Dust" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia from THUNDER AGENTS #4
Dynamo "Red Dragon" (10)
Art: Wally Wood/Dan Adkins/Tim Battersby
FILLER: none

UNDERSEA AGENT

1, January 1966 Cover: Ray Bailey
"Sink the Carrier Gettysburg" (14)
Art: Ray Bailey
**"Undersea Agent Meets Dr. Fang" (14)
Art: Ray Bailey
'The Escape From Lemuria" (16)
Art: Ray Bailey
*The Adventures of Skooby Duolittle" (9)
Art: Ray Bailey
FILLER: "Food, the Cycle of the Sea" (2) Ray Bailey; "Underwater Exploration" (2) John Giunta; text (2)*

2, April 1966 Cover: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
"Return of Dr. Fang" (10)
Art: Ray Bailey/Sheldon Moldoff
*The Secret of the Flying Saucers" (11)
Art: Ray Bailey/Sheldon Moldoff
'Double Jeopardy" (11)
Art: Ray Bailey/Sheldon Moldoff (Moldoff splash)
The Richest Man In The World" (11)
Art: Ray Bailey/Sheldon Moldoff
**"Buried Beneath the Sea" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Joe Gtella (add pages)/Frank Giacoia (even pages)
FILLER "Mysteries of the Deep" (1) ?; "Ocean Oddities" (1) ?

3, June 1966 Cover: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
"To Save a King" (14)
Art: Ray Bailey
At The Mercy of Doctor Mayhem" (16)
Art: Ray Bailey
*The Panther Whales" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
*The Will Weed" (10)
Art: Gil Kane Story: Gil Kane
'True or False" (7)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: "Submarines" (2) John Giunta



4, August 1966 Cover: Gil Kane
"Introducing Dolph" (14)
Art: Ray Bailey
**"To Save a Monster" (12)
Art: Gil Kane Story: Gil Kane
*The Haunted Shipwreck" (14)
Art: Ray Bailey
"Bait-Can Caper" (10)
Art: Frank Bolle
FILLER: letters (1)

5, October 1966 Cover: Gil Kane
** Born Is a Warrior" (20)
Art: Gil Kane Story: Gil Kane
Death Darts From the Ocean Floor" (10)
Art: Ray Bailey
Mermen" (Part One; 10)
*The Showdown on Venus" (Part Two; 14)
Art: Manny Stallman
FILLER: letters (1)

6, March 1967 Cover: Wally Wood
"Doomsday In the Depths" (20)
Art: Gil Kane Story: Gil Kane
*The Sea Stalag" (10)
Art: Ray Bailey
Mermen "Lobster Island" (10)
Art: Ray Bailey
FILLER: letters (2)

DYNAMO

1, August 1966 Cover: Wally Wood
"Menace From the Moon" (14)
Art: Wally Wood
*A Day In The Life of Dynamo" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
"Back to the Stone Age" (10)
Art: Reed Crandall/Wally Wood
"Dynamo Meets The Amazing Andor" (10)
Art: Steve Ditko/Wally Wood
Weed "Wonder Weed, Super-Hero" (10)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: none

2, October 1966 Cover: Wally Wood
"The Plot of S.P.I.D.E.R." (10)
Art: Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
"S.P.I.D.E.R. Strikes At Sea" (10)
Art: Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
*The Priceless Counterfeit" (10)
Art: Chic Stone/Wally Wood
*Between Two Enemies" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Mike Peppe
Weed "The Hyena" (10)
Art: George Tuska
FILLER: The Red Star (1) Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia; Andor the Hu-manoid (1) Dan Adkins

3, March 1967 Cover: Wally Wood
"The Unseen Enemy" (10)
Art: Wally Wood
"Bad Day For Leonard Brown" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
'The Feats of Samson" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
"Honeymoon or High Noon?" (10)
Art: Paul Reinman
Weed "Weed Vs. THUNDER" (10)
Art: George Tuska
FILLER: letters (2)

4, June 1967 Cover: Wally Wood
'The Maze" (10)
Art: Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
*The Secret Word Is..." (10)
Art: Dan Adkins/Wally Wood
"Dynamo's Day Off" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
'The Weakest Man In The World" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
Weed "Once Upon a Time" (10)
Art: Wally Wood Story: Wally Wood
FILLER: letters (2)

FIGHT THE ENEMY

1, August 1966 Cover: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
Saga of the Lucky 7 "The Mission" (11)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
*The Wall In The Desert" (6)
Art: Jerry Grandenetti
"When It's Time to Die..." (12)
Art: Jerry Grandenetti
Secret Agent Mike Manly "Message of Doom" (10)
Art: Dick Giordano
'Chain of Command" (7)
Art: Jose Delbo
'Iwo Jima" (6)
Art: Jose Delbo

moved the helmet, Menthor could remember nothing that occurred under its influence.) THUNDER dubs him "Menthor" and gives him custody of the device.

Predictably, after Janus lets the Warlord strike force in, he dons the helmet, does a Jekyll-Hyde split, and beats the enemy squad and a giant-monster single-handedly. Menthor used his psycho-powers sparingly in the fracas, limiting himself to mind-reading and sapping the strength of his fallen opponents. The rest was a typical Kane fist-to-chin punchout. The Warlord was ignorant of Methor's direct involvement and still held him as a trusted agent at the end of the story.

The series concept began to change with the next issue. The scripters decided to take the easy way out and make THUNDER's telepath a full-time hero. Janus becomes predominantly good, renounces the Warlord ("I must help THUNDER stop this fiend!") and shambles through an action-filled but pointless episode. It was one of his few weak outings, as Menthor's stories soon surpassed the rest in intricacy of plotting.

A two-part story, which ran in #3 and 4, involved the loss of the helmet to his evil brother Conrad, who promptly imitated Menthor and hypnotized Dynamo into running amok at full power through THUNDER headquarters. The phony perished when his bullet ricocheted from Dynamo's body back into his own chest. He failed to reveal John Janus's whereabouts. The next story, rendered by Giunta and Wood, had the thickest plot of any Tower ten-pager ever published: Menthor develops amnesia and is rescued by the Great Hypno, a carnival mentalist, who discovers the residual powers in Janus's mind and hypnotically causes him to steal back the helmet. Menthor eventually regains his memory and the story climaxes with a helmetless Menthor and a helmeted Hypno playing human pawns against each other in Fort Knox. After that, the helmet would be stolen twice; it became as big a cliche as NaMan's mandatory "death" per story.

(In issue #6, Menthor lost the helmet and still hadn't recovered it by the end of the story. One character remarked that they "had a good lead on (the thief's) whereabouts." It must've been a GREAT lead; he had the helmet back in the next issue with no explanation whatsoever.)

Menthor ran for seven stories in THUNDER #1 through 7, and his series ended in one of Tower's most excellent climaxes. But that's a tale for later on in this piece. At the OTHER end of the spectrum, THUNDER AGENTS #1 introduced the fourth and final feature that was anything but spectacular. It was derivative, dull, and poorly done. Tower must have gotten the message quickly, because it only ran four issues. Of course, the feature was the THUNDER SQUAD.

The weak sister of an otherwise excellent group of strips, the Squad was drawn in all four issues by Mike Sekowsky. It starred a group of five (later four) non-super specialists who cooled off hot spots around the globe. Each one was pretty stereotyped: Guy Gilbert was the squad leader and matinee idol; Dynamite John Adkins (renamed DAN Adkins in #111) played Big Dumb Muscleman and demo expert; "Kitten" Kane, a girl, was the token sexpot and software expert; Weed Wylie, the most engaging of the bunch, was a weasel-like, chain-smoking, shifty-eyed safe-cracker short on intellect but long on cunning; and Egghead...well, his name says it all. He ended up by being snuffed unceremoniously in the second issue. Nobody in the story seemed to notice. On their own, the group was about as exciting as white bread. They were soon phased out and became fairly interesting supporting characters in other strips. The first adventure set them against the Warlord and his zombie army to recover a stolen laser gun. They were successful, but the Warlord boasted of his capture of Dynamo to them, allowing a tie-in with his earlier story.

Finally, in Dynamo's second outing in the book (he was to have two stories per issue until #5), the entire cast and crew assembled in Justice Society-fashion to reunite Dynamo with his belt and drive the Iron Maiden from her island base. The last caption in the book promised, "See the criminals brought to justice in the next issue of THUNDER AGENTS!" All in all, it was one of the best-illustrated first issues of the mid-sixties, and even if the dialogue was wooden, the art was Wood. It was to set the format for the next eighteen issues of the book.

Issue #2, like issue #1, was largely a four-part novel centering on the DYNAMO story. Len Brown and company took on the super-robot Dynavac, Iron Maiden, Demo and a horde of zombies; THUNDER headquarters was destroyed; and a final confrontation was had with the Warlord. Unmasked, he turned out to be a bug-eyed, green-skinned humanoid who committed suicide with an atomic bomb. (Now, THAT'S committing suicide!) In #3 it was revealed that the Warlord was but one member of a subterranean race who had it in for the surface world; one of their cities had been devastated by an underground nuclear test, and in the finest Sub-Mariner tradition, they were about to return the compliment. Dynamo disposed of the Warlord's first successor by neatly sandwiching him between ceiling and floor. By this time, having introduced the next evil counterpart to THUNDER, the book's storylines were independent of each other. New costumed villains like the Red Dragon and Vibraman owed no allegiance to any organization.

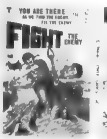
At this point, it is pleasant to reflect on several trademarks of Tower scripting. The restraint displayed in avoiding the supernatural had already been discussed. Tower characters were little more than two steps away from reality, and their world was not beset by the super-hero population explosions of Marvel and DC. Also, the good guys were not tied down to Metropolis or New York City. As members of an international peace-keeping force, they ranged over the entire WORLD. Dynamo, NaMan, Menthor and their chums traded punches in the Middle East, Vietnam, island chains, the Himilayas, and even that strange and half-mythical land the ancients call Texas (and I'm still burned up about that one, so don't ask me about it!). It provided an interesting contrast within the strip, and convinced the reader that THUNDER was indeed "international," moreso than, say, the American-based SHIELD ever did. (Curiously, though THUNDER was a U.N. taskforce, all the member agents chosen to become super-heroes were Americans. Tower couldn't quite escape provinciality completely.)

The few stories utilizing alien (meaning from other worlds) beings were great. The situation was handled credibly, with the feeling of First Contact that has long since been lost in these days of Skrull-Kree Wars and Galactic Federations. The well-done Dynamo "alien-trilogy" (DYNAMO #1,3, and 4) by Wood is a case in point. The eeriness of the encounter is played to the hilt by never letting the reader actually see the invaders until the last page of the third story; nor do they communicate with man until the very last panels. The object lesson, that man is a stranger in a hostile universe, was made more chillingly effective in this fashion than if a billion invading Skrull fleets had been shown.

Also, Tower was never afraid to be FUN. Dynamo and Weed played it for laughs every time they got the chance. "Now to get back up to the penthouse...in a single leap!" thought Dynamo in one story as he took a single bound from street level. He landed on a ledge halfway up: "Hmmm--might take two leaps." In the same issue, Len Brown jumped through the roof of a getaway car: "I'll just put me in the driver's seat!" (parodying the popular commercial of that time). Driver: "That HURTS!" Two panels later, he rolled the baddies home inside auto tires. Weed faced villains who gained super-powers after being bitten by radioactive moles (!), buried Dynamo under a vat of molten peanut butter, and stopped a

FILLER: Gallant Warriors: "Major Charles Loring, Jr., U.S.A.F." (2) Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia

2, October 1966 Cover: Jose Delbo
Saga of the Lucky 7 "Mitchell's Revenge" (12)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Joe Gi ella (pp. 1-8)/Frank Giacoia (pp. 9-12)
"The Ace" (5)
Art: Frank Bolle
"The Silent Service" (8)
Art: Russ Jones/Al McWilliams Story: Russ Jones
"Dead Wrong" (9)
Art: Ray Bailey
Mike Manly Secret Agent "The XX119"
Art: Jose Delbo
"Green Beets" (12)
Art: Boris Vallejo
FILLER: K.P. McGoof (1) Sam Schwartz



3, March 1967 Covers: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
Zeek Fight of the Green Beets "The Draftee" (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
"Pearl Harbor...Old Subs Never Die..." (10)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia
"The Young Ones" (8)
Art: Alden McWilliams
Secret Agent Mike Manly "Assignment In Paris" (10)
Art: Jose Delbo
Lucky-7 "A Date With Alice" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
FILLER: "Robert Scott, American Ace" (1/2) Wally Wood, K.P. McGoof (2)

NoMAN

1, November 1966 Cover: Wally Wood
"Fingers of Fate" (10)
Art: Gil Kane/Paul Reinman
"Secret In The Sky" (10)
Art: John Giunta
Lightning "The Warp Wizard's Master Plan" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
***"Trapped In The Past" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
"The Good Subterranean" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
FILLER: none

2, March 1967 Cover: Wally Wood
***"Dynamo Vs. NoMan" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
"The Weird Case of the Kiss of Death" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
Lightning "The Web Tighters" (10)
Art: Chic Stone
"Target NoMan" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
"A Quick Change of Mind" (10)
Art: Ogden Whitney
FILLER: none

PAPERBACK REPRINTS

DYNAMO (Tower Book 42-660) 1966 Cover: Wally Wood
reprint from splash of "Menace of the Iron Fog"
Frantis (1) splash from "Menace of the Iron Fog"
THUNDER Agents "First Encounter" (12) Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #1
**Dynamo "Menace of the Iron Fog" (34) Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #1
NoMan "NoMan Battles the Spawns of the Devil" (27) from THUNDER AGENTS #1; original title: "THUNDER Agent NoMan"
Menthor "The Enemy Within" (35) Gil Kane/George Tuska/Mike Esposito from THUNDER AGENTS #1
Dynamo "At The Mercy of Iron Maiden" (29) Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #1

NoMAN (Tower Book 42-672) 1966 Cover: Chic Stone/
Wally Wood from "In The Warlord's Power" splash page
***In The Warlord's Power" (31) Chic Stone/Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #2
*NoMan Faces the Threat of the Amazing Vibraman" (29) John Giunta/Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #2
*The Synthetic Stand-in" (29) Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia from THUNDER AGENTS #4
*NoMan In Action" (3) Dan Adkins from THUNDER AGENTS #4
"In The Caverns of Dawn" (30) Gil Kane/Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #5
Back cover: NoMan secret file dossier (1) Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #3

MENTHOR (Tower Book 42-674) 1966 Cover: Steve Ditko/
Wally Wood from "A Matter of Life and Death" THUNDER AGENTS #7
*"Menthor" (30) Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia from THUNDER AGENTS #2
*Dynamo Vs. Menthor" (29) Wally Wood/Dan Adkins from THUNDER AGENTS #3
*The Great Hypno" (33) John Giunta/Dan Adkins from THUNDER AGENTS #4
*Menthor Vs. The Entrancer" (30) John Giunta from THUNDER AGENTS #5
Back cover: splash from "The Great Hypno" (1)

THE TERRIFIC TRIO (Tower Book 42-687) 1966 Cover: Dan Adkins from "The Origin of T.H.U.N.D.E.R." from THUNDER AGENTS #4
Dynamo "Dynamo Battles the Subterraneans" (28) Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #3
Dynamo "Dynamo Battles Dynavac" (39) Wally Wood from THUNDER AGENTS #2
Menthor "The Carnival of Death" (31) John Giunta/Ray Bailey from THUNDER AGENTS #6
NoMan "To Fight Alone" (28) Steve Ditko from THUNDER AGENTS #6

fracas between THUNDER and the Red Star by spraying both sides with stupidity gas. Tower held the humor down to a tongue-in-cheek level, rather than the excessive approach of NOT BRAND ECHH or THE INFERIOR FIVE, and induced more belly laughs than both of them. It was, once again, the Captain Marvel approach retailored for the sixties.

But it wasn't all fun and games in THUNDER AGENTS. Far from it. The seventh issue presented on of the rarest breeds of super-hero stories ever: the death of a major character in his own strip.

The story, drawn by Ditko and Wood, was titled "A Matter of Life and Death!" In the splash panel, Menthor, stripped of his helmet, faced two armed Subterranean Warlords. No cover blurb advertised this story, and grimmer splash pages can be found by the carload. The reader was pretty well unprepared for the following ten-page epic.

A cadre of Warlords discover a means of jamming Menthor's helmet and capture him, hoping to lead the other super-agents into a deathtrap. "The machines you see here are a battery of laser guns trained on that doorway," gloats Menthor's captor. "When anything crosses that electric eye, it is blasted...instantly! Faster than even super-human reflexes can react! This time we put an end to THUNDER...for good!"

Desperately, Menthor makes a grab for his helmet; a Warlord shoots him in the side. With the lives of his approaching friends at stake, Menthor stumbles across the room. Subterraneans from all sides pump hot lead into his body. "Must do something...can't let them kill...Len...Kitten...Weed...NoMan...Guy...got to...warn...them..."

Shot point-blank six times, the telepath forces his body to take one last step into the doorway, and in full view of Dynamo, NoMan and crew, a triple burst of ruby energy cuts through his body...and Menthor DIES!

The shocking death scene was the most violent snuffing of a super-hero ever recorded in the comics. Certainly, it was the most memorable scene in the THUNDER saga. Consumed with mindless rage, Dynamo and company turn on the subterraneans and wipe out the entire installation, herding their last victims into the doorway deathtrap. Grimly, the story closes with Menthor's funeral; from here on in, the war against the green men is total. (Total war against aliens was nothing new for Wally Wood, though; from his participation in the famous '50s "Mars Attacks" gumcard series through Gold Key's TOTAL WAR, the idea of mankind vs. ruthless alien creatures was a recurrent one.)

Many companies have used the death of a hero as a major springboard

for a story. But in almost all cases, the victim is a cancelled character who meets the Reaper while guest-starring in somebody else's strip. Menthor, a strong member of the THUNDER line-up since #1, met violent death in his own story and so increased the drama a thousand-fold. No more than a handful of death scenes in '60s and '70s comics can match the impact of Menthor's, and NONE surpass it. The story was a foreshadowing: In the very next issue, the death of the Subterranean Overlord at the hands of NoMan brought the series to a close.

By this time, two new super-heroes had been added to the book. Neither matched Dynamo in popularity or quality and both strips were eventually dropped. LIGHTNING was Guy Gilbert of the ill-fated THUNDER Squad. To combat a weapon that slowed human reactions to a standstill, he was outfitted with a costume which made him a hundred times as fast as a normal human. Accordingly, it aged him at the same accelerated pace. Obviously an imitation of the Flash, Lightning's strip wasn't half bad, but never attained greatness. Perhaps the fact that two artists who are rarely associated with drawing graceful, streamlined humans, Mike Sekowsky and Chic Stone, handled the art may have been the reason.

THE RAVEN, who took over Methor's slot, showed promise at the outset. Originally a mercenary, Craig Lawson was recruited by THUNDER to employ a jet-pack device against flying Subterraneans. He became a loyalist after Lightning saved his life. After the first strip, the art (and it is charity to call it that) was handled by Manny Stallman. Stallman had drawn DC's BIG TOWN for the last five years of its run, but had been inked by John Giunta there; his mystery tales for Atlas during that period were pretty tightly inked though. For Tower, with its smaller original art size, though, Stallman switched to a heavy, brush-dominated style which was met with heavy dislike by the readership. (Stallman's current occupation is drawing ADVENTURES OF THE BIG BOY -- and he's little better-suited to do that.) Tower dumped the strip in #13 to substitute an UNDERSEA AGENT filler drawn by Paul Reinman. In the next issue, a totally new direction was taken, as Gil Kane wrote and drew a ten-page RAVEN feature. He also did the cover, making this Raven's only featured appearance. The airborne agent battled a Communist psychic-spy called the Prophet in this story; it was the last Raven outing to see print, and by far the best.

After the fall of the subterraneans, THUNDER promptly found itself faced with another cliche-driven evil organization. This time the baddies called themselves SPIDER, which stood for the Secret People's International Directorate for Extralegal Revenue. A military figure assured us in their first appearance that "This is an organization of professional criminals all dedicated to the destruction of the American way of life." "The rat!" observes Dynamo with characteristic profundity. Eventually, Iron Maiden, Demo and all the rest of the Warlord's old hirelings ended up in the pay of THUNDER's version of THRUSH. It was easier to keep SPIDER around than to destroy it and think up a new Evil Menace. They were still around by the Agents' last battles.

The last important continuing character was Andor, a human child brought up under the evil auspices of the Subterraneans and constantly suffered brainwashings by them so that he would attempt to destroy T.H.U.N.D.E.R. He guest-starred first in DYNAMO #1, and made many appearances afterward, nearly taking over the focus of the strips he appeared in, usually battling Dynamo. He was an extremely tragic figure, losing his memory and his sight and constantly losing women he loved. The Subterraneans gave him super-strength enough to battle Dynamo to a standstill, the latter somewhat sympathetic to Andor's plight and continually finding himself unable to finish Andor off for good. Had things progressed, it's quite possible that Andor might have become a member of the group.

Tower's growing success caused a few spin-offs by 1966; all were 25-cent giants like the parent THUNDER AGENTS. Dynamo had four issues of his own book, featuring some of Wood's best art. NoMan, with slightly less excellent work, lasted for two solo outings. A war book, FIGHT THE ENEMY, stayed for three issues; and TIPPY TEEN, a nominal Archie-type offering, ended up outlasting THUNDER AGENTS. Debuting the same month as THUNDER AGENTS #1, TIPPY TEEN eventually ran 27 issues, as it was able to weather the backlash period of 1968-69 which virtually wiped out the back-seaters.

UNDERSEA AGENT proved to be the longest-lived non-THUNDER adventure book from Tower with six issues between January, 1966 and March, 1967. Basically, the series was a rough cross between THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. and SEA HUNT. Lt. Davey Jones was featured as the crack agent of UNDERSEA, an experimental domed city on the ocean floor. Jones battled various underwater menaces and gained magnetic powers in issue #2, but floundered due to poor art and worse writing. Gil Kane arrived by issue #3 to stage an underwater rescue mission; by issues #5 and 6 he had contributed some effective art and covers, especially the Wood-inked beauty fronting #6. But it just wasn't help enough and the book went down for the third time when Tower devoted all its resources to shoring up THUNDER.

Up to this point, emphasis has been placed on Tower's good aspects. And THUNDER was the highest-quality super-hero book from a minor company during this period. But there WERE weak points in the series: for one thing, the lead characters were never very DEEP. Personality development was minimalized in favor of plotting and action, so that the only heroes with a chance at well-defined characters were Dynamo and NoMan. Even in these cases it depended on the whim of the individual writer.

Secondly, the existence of an entire monolithic organization working for "good," such as UNCLE, THUNDER or SHIELD, required a similar and equally-powerful organization dedicated to evil. Thus THUNDER was always fighting the same enemy: the evil worldwide agency out to conquer Earth. The Warlord menace and SPIDER had a dreary sameness, but the series could no more stray from the concept than can SHIELD finally destroy HYDRA. The good guys have to have someone big enough for them to fight.

Naturally, the series suffered at times from poor continuity. All the writers were free-lancers and thus were not encouraged to leave plot-lines dangling at the ends of stories. After the first two issues, individual stories bore little relationship to each other. Perhaps this has to do with lack of editorial experience with non-humor material; Tower's only other acknowledged editor besides Wood was teen-age humor artist Sam Schwartz, who drew TIPPY TEEN, having served his apprenticeship by drawing Archie for years before that. Thus, Menthor lost his helmet and got it back without an explanation; NoMan undertook a space mission in #7 which was never so much as mentioned afterward; Lightning was injured by flak in the same issue and turned up hale and hardy in #8; Raven changed his flight gear and uniform twice without even a caption to acknowledge the fact; and Dynamo was shot, blown up and hospitalized many times during the same month. (Blue Cross must've loved him!) Footnotes were as rare as a purple dodo.

In an era in which Continuity has become a Holy Grail to fans and scripters alike, and the Omniversal Theory threatens to make comics-reading an Einsteinian task, Tower's lack of cohesive storylines seems barren indeed. But it resulted in well-plotted, entertaining, self-contained short stories, at least five per issue in nineteen issues. Only a handful of THUNDER tales ran to two parts,

and the only three-parter, the "alien trilogy," was composed of three separate but related stories. Modern comics writers, with their penchant for stretching serials out for two years at a time, might do well to study Tower techniques.

When Tower Comics gave up the (new story) ghost in 1968, poor sales were not the reason. "Harry (Shorten) told me later that the books always made money," wrote Wally Wood. "He was forced out by his distributor [PDC], who also handled another comic book company (Harvey)." The finger of suspicion is cast, however, more likely at DC and Marvel, who were said to have had something to do with the demise of Charlton's action-hero line -- despite the fact that Charlton was self-distributed. DC's independent News arm had apparently asked the largest wholesalers to overlook the competitors' books which they felt were directly siphoning off their share of the super-hero market -- and must have had the clout to achieve their goal. As Tower's output spiraled down to two summer issues in 1968, the talent had to look elsewhere to find work, and Wood, Kane and Ditko ended up plying their trade for DC leaving the THUNDER AGENTS to the hands of the likes of Mike Sekowsky, Paul Reinman, Chic Stone and Ogden Whitney.

Not to mention the fact that the final issues were plagued by irregular distribution. There was a gap of several months between #10 and 11, during which most readers thought the book had been cancelled. At other times, particularly from issues #12 to 16, the books seemed to come out every three weeks. With the shelving of Lightning and Raven, the book's line-up became too unstable, and Dynamo was forced to carry a disproportionate share of the comic. His stories (probably prepared for the by then cancelled DYNAMO title) increased from one to three per issue; in the last books, they were offset only by one NoMAN story and a reprint. As Tower's older and better artists moved on to other companies, the book became dominated by second-stringers.

Finally, in 1968 they threw in the towel along with the other minor super-hero lines. THUNDER AGENTS #17 was dated December 1967; #18 bore a September 1968 cover date, and #19, for all intents and purposes the last issue, was dated November, 1968. A year later Tower made a half-hearted comeback with THUNDER AGENTS #20, a book of reprints with a four-page recap of Dynamo's origin.

Except for one more TIPPY TEEN reprint issue dated February 1970, this poorly-distributed issue was the last gasp for Tower Comics.

Where do they stand in retrospect? Actually, more favorably than most. In THUNDER, Wally Wood unleashed his best post-EC comics work; his run of DAREDEVIL is hardly comparable. The Wood Dynamo still stands as one of the best-drawn super-heroes of that period. TA also featured equally high-quality work by Crandall, Kane and Ditko. Too, THUNDER AGENTS was the first regularly-published giant-sized comic featuring original material to survive for an extensive run; Tower was the exception at the time when the 32-pager was king.

In the increasingly complex world of super-hero scripts and soap-opera characterization, Tower proved that solid plots, self-contained stories and ten-pagers could be effective. And, of course, they gave us Dynamo, No-Man and Menthor, whom most '60s fans remember as fondly as most of the Marvel and DC horde of that time.

Moreover, Tower had proven that a third-force comics company could compete with the two established super-hero publishers, and WIN. Most of the minors were willing to pick the crumbs from the DC-Marvel table; Tower Comics stood beside the two giants in terms of sales and quality. Of the second-string publishers, Tower Comics was the ONLY first-rate group.

The THUNDER Agents may have been back-seaters, but they fought all the way to the front of the bus.

NEXT: "ACTION-HEROES? WE'VE GOT 'EM!"

(The author wishes to thank Wally Wood for information, George Olshevsky for inspiration, and Marvin and Elizabeth Slaughter for editing, advice, the loan of their collection, and much beer and good conversation. LM)

Charlton Coming Comics

CHARLTON BULLSEYE No. 6, March. This issue features THUNDERBUNNY by Martin Greim and Ken Machlan. Machlan and Jerry Ordway did the cover. [12/3]

THE MANY GHOSTS OF DR. GRAVES No. 71, March. [12/3]

BILLY THE KID No. 147, April. [12/10]

WAR No. 32, April. [12/10]

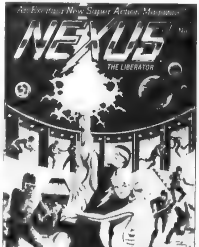
THE FIGHTIN' 5 No. 45, April. [12/17]

GHOSTLY TALES No. 154, April. [12/17]

Et Al

At the Chicago Comicon in July, Jim and Chuck were interviewed for Canadian radio by Bill Paul. If any of our Canadian readers (or Bill Paul himself) can supply them with a cassette recording of the interview, it'd be greatly appreciated the both of them (and, of course, you'd be reimbursed for the cost). Write Jim Engel at 522 S. Craig Place, Lombard, IL 60148 if you can help.

Wisconsin has its own semi-professional comics group to go with its professional one (Kitchen Sink): Capital Publications, Inc., headed by John Davis, Richard Bruning and John Davis. They've announced their first project, a 40-page black and white quarterly magazine called NEXUS THE LIBERATOR. Shipping this month, the magazine features a strip which is set in the 25th century by Mike Baron and Steve Rude. It features a color cover by Paul Gulacy and there will be a special, numbered edition of 500 signed copies which features a free bonus print on heavy stock of the hero by Steve Rude. The regular copy price is $1.95 through comic shops everywhere, the numbered edition is $5.00. Single copies may be ordered by mail (including $1.00 for postage) from Westfield Comics, 302 N. Westfield Road, Madison, WI 53717.



NEXUS THE LIBERATOR No. 1, March. "Nexus the Liberator" is by Mike Baron and Steve Rude. Into a 25th century in which mankind has spread civilization throughout the universe is sent an unwilling agent of justice to see that the wishes of a non-human race are carried out. Besides the 30-page story are three pages of special features and a double-page pull-out poster. Paul Gulacy did the cover. [11/24]

TCR Top 100 Comic Books

This mo.	Last mo.	Title, Number Publisher, Special Features, Format, Price If not 50c/60c	No. sold
1	1	THE UNCANNY X-MEN No. 150 Marvel; 48 pages; 75c	5421
2	3*	THE UNCANNY X-MEN ANNUAL No. 5 Marvel; 48 pages; 75c	4263
3	--	THE AVENGERS ANNUAL No. 10 Marvel, with the X-Men, Ms. Marvel; 48 pages, 75c	4254
4	--	DRAGONSLAYER No. 1 Marvel-Paramount/Disney	3247
5	--	FOR YOUR EYES ONLY No. 1 Marvel-UA	3055
6	6	FANTASTIC FOUR No. 235 Marvel	2849
7	7	THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 12 DC	2825
8	2	RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK No. 2 Marvel-Lucasfilm	2800
9	13	THE AVENGERS No. 212 Marvel	2614
10	8	DAZZLER No. 8 Marvel	2592
11	18*	WHAT IF? No. 29 Marvel; 48 pages, The Avengers; 75c	2518
12	12	MOON KNIGHT No. 12 Marvel	2483
13	15	THE DEFENDERS No. 100 Marvel; numerous guest-stars, 48 pages; 75c	2401
14	5	IRON MAN No. 151 Marvel	2385
15	11	DAREDEVIL No. 175 Marvel	2372
16	--	CAPTAIN VICTORY AND HIS GALACTIC RANGERS No. 1 Pacific; $1.00	2280
17	4	ARAK/SON OF THUNDER No. 2 DC	2228
18	14	KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE No. 7 Marvel	2178
19	18	ROM No. 23 Marvel	2133
20	16	THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 221 Marvel	2075
21	20	MICRONAUTS No. 34 Marvel	1990
22	5*	DOCTOR STRANGE No. 49 Marvel	1949
23	3	ALL-STAR SQUADRON No. 2 DC	1930
24	9	THE KRYPTON CHRONICLES No. 2 DC	1929
25	17	PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 59 Marvel	1923
26	11*	CONAN THE BARBARIAN ANNUAL No. 6 Marvel	1920
27	21	STAR WARS No. 52 Marvel-Lucasfilm	1890
28	8*	FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL No. 16 Marvel; with the Dragon Lord; 48 pages; 75c	1886
29	24	CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 127 Marvel	1850
30	11*	MARVEL TEAM-UP ANNUAL No. 4 Marvel; Spider-Man, Power Man, Iron Fist, Daredevil; 48;75c	1832
31	13*	THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL No. 3 Marvel; with Man-Wolf, 48 pages, 75c	1798
32	13*	MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE ANNUAL No. 6 Marvel; Thing, Captain America, Am.Eagle, Ka-Zar,48,75c	1796
33	26	THOR No. 312 Marvel	1787
34	25	MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 110 Marvel, Spider-Man and Iron Man	1699
35	--	CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL No. 5 Marvel; 48 pages; 75c	1619
36	31	JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 195 DC	1607
37	30	MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 80 Marvel; The Thing and Ghost Rider	1557
38	29	CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 262 Marvel	1535
39	27*	SPIDER-WOMAN No. 40 Marvel	1515
40	28	POWER MAN AND IRON FIST No. 74 Marvel	1438
41	39	THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 264 Marvel	1409
42	36	THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 280 DC	1360
43	34	THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK No. 21 Marvel	1336
44	34*	STAR TREK No. 16 Marvel-Paramount	1329
45	33	MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 105 Marvel	1318
46	22	WARLORD No. 50 DC	1224
47	35	GREEN LANTERN No. 145 DC	1206
48	32	DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 38 DC; Superman and the Flash	1176
49	38	BATMAN No. 340 DC	1129
50	41	DETECTIVE COMICS No. 507 DC	1062
51	40	GHOST RIDER No. 61 Marvel	1042
52	37	THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 68 Marvel, black and white magazine, $1.25	1034
53	45	THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 179 DC, Batman and the Legion of Super-Heroes	1033
54	46	THE FLASH No. 302 DC	976
55	50	THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 22 DC	950
56	47	SUPERMAN No. 364 DC	913
57	48	WONDER WOMAN No. 284 DC	906
58	52	ACTION COMICS No. 524 DC	894
59	51	ADVENTURE COMICS PRESENTS DIAL "H" FOR HERO No.486 Marvel	852
60	53	HEAVY METAL No. 53 [V5#5] HM; color magazine; $2.00	754
61	54	WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No. 272 DC, 48 pages; $1.00	642
62	56	THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 211 DC, 48 pages; $1.00	553
63	58	MARVEL SUPER ACTION No. 36 Marvel; Avengers reprints	476
64	57	JONAH HEX No. 53 DC	452
65	59	MARVEL TALES STARRING SPIDER-MAN No. 132 Marvel; reprints	439
66	64	WEIRD WAR TALES No. 104 DC	391
67	60	THE BEST OF DC No. 17 DC, Supergirl; digest; 95c	355
68	55	MARVEL SUPER-HEROES No. 102 Marvel; Hulk reprints	315
69	62	DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST No. 14 DC, UFO Invaders reprints; digest, 95c	275
70	57*	1994 No. 20 Warren; black and white magazine, $2.00	239
71	66	SGT. ROCK No. 357 DC	225
72	67*	SGT. FURY No. 166 Marvel; reprints	218
73	68	HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 297 DC	211
74	67	UNKNOWN SOLDIER No. 256 DC	204
75	69	THE UNEXPECTED No. 215 DC	203
76	73	GHOSTS No. 105 DC	202
77	71	G.I. COMBAT No. 234 DC, 48 pages; $1.00	176
78	72	VAMPIRELLA No. 99 Warren, black and white magazine, $2.00	170
79	64*	EERIE No. 124 Warren; black and white magazine, $2.00	158
80	70	SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE No. 41 DC	144
81	75	CREEPY No. 131 Warren, black and white magazine; $2.00	134
82	77	CRAZY MAGAZINE No. 78 Marvel, black and white magazine, 90c	82
83	--	SHOCKING TALES DIGEST No. 1 Harvey; reprints, digest, 95c	41
84	80*	RICHIE RICH AND GLORIA No. 21 Harvey	23
85	82*	RICHIE RICH BANK BOOKS No. 54 Harvey	23
86	84*	RICHIE RICH GOLD AND SILVER No. 37 Harvey	23
87	88*	RICHIE RICH RICHES No. 55 Harvey	23
88	75*	RICHIE RICH DOLLARS AND CENTS No. 104 Harvey	22
89	91*	SAD SACK AND THE SARGE No. 151 Harvey	22
90	--	RICHIE RICH DIGEST STORIES No. 11 Harvey	21
91	83*	RICHIE RICH GEMS No. 38 Harvey	21
92	100*	LAUGH COMICS DIGEST No. 36 Archie; digest; 95c	19
93	82	RICHIE RICH No. 207 Harvey	19
94	77*	DEVIL KIDS No. 107 Harvey	18
95	78*	FRIENDLY GHOST CASPER No. 218 Harvey	18
96	90*	RICHIE RICH VAULTS OF MYSTERY No. 42 Harvey	18
97	90	ARCHIE No. 308 Archie	17
98	97	ARCHIE'S GIRLS, BETTY AND VERONICA No. 309 Archie	17
99	99*	JUGHEAD WITH ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 46 Archie	17
100	97*	PEP No. 377 Archie	17

*-denotes titles published less

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FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL

with Jim Engel & Chuck Fiala

this month: TCR Family Album

HI! I'M BIG ROW-MYSELF! I WRITE THE USERSHAND COLUMN, WHICH ALLOWS A BIG FELLA LIKE ME TO SIT-1 ANALIZE WEARINGS, SUPERMAN! "UNDERDOGS" AT MY AGE THE HARD PART IS CONVINCING MY WIFE SHE PREFERS ME IN MY "BIGA PETS"!
I'M JERRY SIMGOVE! I'LL PUBLISH THIS RAG. AND TO ALL THE SMARTY BY THE WAY, I DIDN'T COLOR THIS PAGE - YOUR COPY WAS LEFT ON THE STREET. ENTERPRISES LAVITORN FLOOR BY MISTAKE!
I'M HEAD DON ROSA, A.K.A. CAPT. KENTUCKY, H. 3D OF LOO-UH-VILLE'S. I ALSO HANDLE "INFORMATIONS CENTER" SINCE I SH! HERE'S A CONFIDENTIAL REPLY TO AN INQUIRY FROM A TIME-2 SHOOTER - YOU'RE READERS INFORMED YOU CORRECTLY - MARK PAM WHO INDEED A HERO CAKE/CHEEK EARLY PATRONISH AND AVENGERS, #1-211!
I'M CHUCK FIALA! BESIDES CO-HOSTING F.C. WITH JIMBO, I DO "BULLETORIAL" ELSE WHERE HERE-IN! MY SPECIALTY IS CONCENTRIC CIRCLES (THE KIND EVEN I CAN DRAW) AND I WANT TO BE BILL WARD WHEN HE GROWS UP!
I'M JACOB MORAINE! I WRITE "COMIC STRIP CIRCUS" - TCR'S NEWSPAPER STRIP COLUMN! I'M A REAL COMICS EXPERT, 'CAUSE I WORK GARRY TRUDEAU'S ASSISTANT BEFORE HE GOT HIS XEROX MACHINE! WATCH FOR MY UP-COMING IN VINA BIBBER SUPER-SPECIAL!
I'M TCR EDITOR MIKE TIEFENBACHER! I DO MY BEST TO MAKE THIS THE FINEST PUBLICATION FANDOM CAN BOAST, AND I'VE GATHERED THIS FINE GROUP TO HELP ME DO IT! I ESPECIALLY ADORE THE INSULT-TA-JEATED JIM + CHUCK, WHO PRODUCE THE FUNNIEST STUFF ON THE SALE OF THE EARTH AND ALSO WORDS MY LOUD BALLOONS!
I'M JIM ENGEL, THE OTHER F.C. HOST! I ALSO DRAW "DICK DARK, DUCK DICK," BUT NEVER ADMIT IT IN THE PRESENCE OF A BOB LAWTON CHARACTER! I NEVER MISS AN ISSUE OF T.C.B. - BUT MY STRIPS DO! I HAVE TO ROPE 'EM WITH MIKE - AT LEAST ABOUT MYSELF!
I'M CAT YRONWODE! I WRITE FOR THESE BOZOS ONCE OR TWICE TH. I HOOKED UP WITH ALMOD ORILLIADS LIGHT AND DERANG THE KITSCH AND TOOK TOO THE LAYPERSONS! NOW I HANG WITH WILD AND WRITE A BEAT CODE MUSIC COLUMN FOR THE "BIBLE O FANDOM"!
I'M TERRY "MOD MAN" BEATTY, AND I WORK FOR THOSE TWINKS MYSELF! I ALSO LAY DOWN THE LINE WORK ON MIKE TREE + MS. MIST! I NEVER EVEN READ THIS SHEET, 'CAUSE I'M TOO BUSY PROMOTING THE "CLUB - MORON FOUNDATION AN' DOIN' THE FOOD WITH MY FINE CONNOISSEURS, SYNAC!
WHAAAT?!?
BEAT IT, BEATTY!
SCRAMBOOCH!
THAT DARN CAT!
HIT THE ROAD!
SPIES!
YOU'VE GOT YOUR NERVE!
KILL!
YOU NEVER RETURNED YOUR "WORK FOR HIRE" CONTRACTS!
COMICS AREN'T FOR GURLS!!
OR BEATNIKS!
ART BY JOHN TIEFENBACHER
JACOB MORAINE PORTRAYED BY TALL PALE + UNFERMIC

WHO WILL ATTEND EARTH-ONE'S FIRST
DANGER COUNCIL
WE ALL KNOW THE EARTH ... ONLY 48 HOURS ! EVERY CRIMEFIGHTER LEFT ON THE FACE OF THE PLANET IS NOW CALLED HERE TO THE JUSTICE LEAGUE'S (MINI) SATELLITE ! WE MUST DISCOVER THE INVISIBLE FORCES BEHIND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF EVERY SINGLE MEMBER OF EVERY SUPER KIND IN THE WORLD - AND WHO THEY ARE DESTROY EARTH IF ITS ... OUR ONLY ...
EVERYONE ... KNOW ... PLUS ... SUPERGIRL !
ARE YOU ?

ACTERS © 1981, DC COMICS INC.

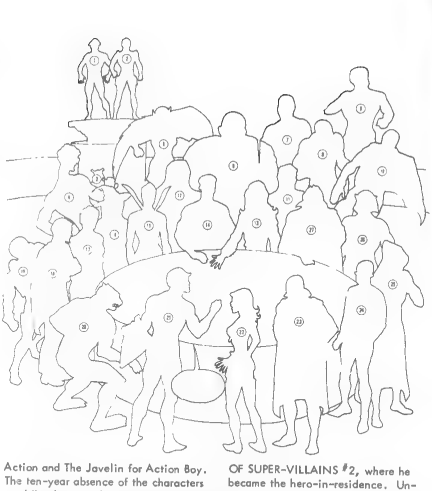
TCR Trivia Contest

THE TRIVIA CONTEST ANSWERS

Judging by the response to the contest, even with the small prize as bait, there are a lot of you out there who enjoy this kind of thing. I promise to try to do some followups, though I can't promise when they'll appear.

Anyway, instead of merely listing the answers, I've decided to do a bit of amplification as to the background of both the characters and my reasons for choosing them, as I had nothing better to do today.

The picture was conceived last year while I was involved in the "Whatever Happened To...?" series for DC. Some of the characters included were indulgences of my own nostalgia, as (quite clearly, from the number of people who couldn't identify them) I seem to be the only person who remembered them. Others, though, I figured might be good material for the WHT series. At this date, only three of these have been updated in the series, though eventually the others might be used as well. In any case, here are the characters and their backgrounds. The numbers naturally correspond to the numbers on the chart.



1. CAPTAIN ACTION - I cheated here, as this isn't a DC character. He is, however, a fondly remembered favorite, and a character who would be widely used today if Ideal didn't own the copyright on him. Based on the doll manufactured for boys in the late '60s by Ideal Toys (you could dress him up in super-hero costumes: Superman, Batman, Aquaman, Spider-Man, Captain America, Lone Ranger, Steve Canyon, Sgt. Fury and The Phantom), DC came up with a character in the vein of the best '60s creations: archaeologist Clive Arno discovers a batch of coins in a Mediterranean dig which are the remnants of an alien race who visited Earth and are now known as the gods of mythology; each gives him a godly power, at least in the origin issue by Jim Shooter, Wally Wood and Mort Weisinger. In #3, Gil Kane and Julie Schwartz took over for three issues, and dumped all but three of the coins in an earthquake-chasm. Clive gave his son Carl some of the coins (and he lost all but one in #3), and their main adversary was the father of Clive's late wife, who blamed Clive for her death. He had evolved himself into Dr. Evil (another Ideal doll). It was the last father-son super-hero team that I can recall, and I've often thought of what might have been if the book had sold enough to continue. (Indeed, I attempted to sell DC a plot which involved only the DC-created Clive and Carl Arno characters and their super-powers, using new names and costumes for the super-heroes themselves; Captain Triumph for Captain Action and The Javelin for Action Boy. The ten-year absence of the characters would've been explained by Clive having been in prison for the "murder" of his father-in-law, who -- being evolved into something non-human -- had not been seen for years. But, alas, no go.)

2. CAPTAIN COMET - Another longtime favorite, solely based on the '50s stories in STRANGE ADVENTURES, Adam Blake was born a mutant, with a future-mind which gave him supergenius intellect -- enough, in fact, to create his own spaceship and cruise the galaxy at super-light speed. The original stories were light-hearted and enjoyable in the '50s DC style of the science-fiction books, and I've always felt that he, rather than Flash, is the first Schwartz-created super-hero of the Silver Age (although I've also always felt that the cut-off point for Earth-Two characters is March, 1955, as Johnny Quick, Robotman and Captain Comet's careers ended around that time, Manhunter From Mars was just beginning, and the Comics Code had just begun). For the record, Captain Comet began in STRANGE ADVENTURES #9 and appeared in 36 more stories through #49. He was created by John Broome and drawn by Murphy Anderson and Sy Barry among others. The original costume, with its purely-'50s suspender straps, resembled Adam Strange's too much, which is why they changed it when they revived him for SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER-VILLAINS #2, where he became the hero-in-residence. Unfortunately, much of the original flavor was discarded when the new conception was that of a typical Captain America man-out-of-his-own-era moaner. Well, I still like him.

3. WILDCAT - What's that? Don't believe there's an Earth-One version of Wildcat? Wanna sweep him out with other Murray Boltinoff-edited "contradictions" which appeared in THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD? Well, I would debate it simply on the merits of him having appeared five separate times in B&B, but I don't have to; he also appeared in SUPER-TEAM FAMILY #2, teamed up with The Creeper -- and unless you want two Creepers running around, you'll have to accept another, younger version of ex-prize-fighter Ted Grant. (Another unbought "Whatever Happened To...?" plot explained his retirement.)

4. PLASTIC MAN - This little-known character, who has the ability to stretch himself into weird shapes (honest!) still makes an appearance here and there every now and then.

5. OWLWOMAN - One of E. Nelson Bridwell's creations which appeared in SUPER FRIENDS, Owlwoman will officially become part of a group next year when the DC COMICS PRESENTS Superman team-up with the Global Guardians appears. She debuted in SF #8, and the only other known facts about her are that she is an American Indian from Oklahoma and she has the ability

to fly and see in the dark. I figured she'd be one of the first to make it to the satellite simply due to proximity.

6. CONGORILLA - I have a weakness for gorillas to begin with, and Congorilla was in the first ACTION COMICS I ever had. Besides which, I always loved the idea of a Golden Age character like Congo Bill finally getting an alternate super-identity as the Golden Gorilla, and the concept (Congo Bill -- who never had a last name, that I know of -- was given a magic ring which allowed him to trade bodies with the gorilla) was certainly unique. The only trouble was, since he was stuck in Africa, the plots were the dead-end run-of-the-mill poacher type. He appeared in 27 stories in ACTION #248-261 and ADVENTURE #270-281 and 283, and then JIMMY OLSEN #86 before being revived in DC COMICS PRESENTS #27, looking far more like Grodd than the Howard Sherman version.

7. THE ASSASSIN - Everyone recall that tremendously successful try-out comic, FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL? Well, this character appeared in one of those agonizingly tortured potboilers in which a loved one is murdered and the "hero" sets out to avenge her. His real name's Jonathan Drew, he has telekinetic powers, and I like the costume (which seems very inspired by Gil Kane's costume concepts of the '60s) but I hate everything else about him. ESPECIALLY the name.

8. THE SANDMAN - This is that goofy one Jack Kirby did with Joe Simon in the mid-'70s, and I'm still trying to figure this out. I don't know what kind of help he'd be at this meeting, as he operated in the dream world most of the time, but I though he was rather charming, in a lamebrained sort of way.

9. STARMAN - Starman (Mark II of three) was an alien from God knows where with another John Jones-J'onn J'onzz conveniently-anglicized name: Mikaal Tomas. He followed ASSASSIN in FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #12, and like him, the continued story cliffhanger was never resolved. He was a fugitive like so many others, and again, I liked the costume and name more than the character. (Of the three Starmen, I like the original version best.)

10. JACK O'LANTERN - The only one of ENB's Global Guardians to become more famous after I decided to use him on the cover, Jack is actually Irishman Daniel Cormac, who was given a magic lantern by the fairies which allows him to teleport things, cause illusions and other magical-type things.

11. RICHARD DRAGON, KUNG-FU FIGHTER. Most of the identifying aspects of his apperance aren't really too visible, but the red hair and talisman around his neck should have been your clues here. Can't say I like him much.

12. MIGHTY EAGLE - Well, you either have to be gifted with a photographic memory, or have read and reread the comic this character appeared in as I did, to be able to identify this one. Nobody did. He appeared in the first JIMMY OLSEN I ever bought, #81, and is another American Indian super-hero. (No location is given, though Jimmy is lost in a desert dust-storm -- could be he's a cousin of Owlwoman.) Broken Spear is a skinny mild-mannered guy who ducks into a hollow tree to change to Mighty Eagle, who uses glider-wings and scientific trickery to make evil-doers think he's a true Medicine Man.

13. SUPERGIRL - Seems to me I've seen her somewhere recently, but...

14. A-MAN (ANIMAL MAN) - I've discussed my affection for this character in these pages before, and how I felt the revival in a recent WONDER WOMAN two-parter was messed up, but he's still one of my favorite obscurities. He debuted, sans costume, in STRANGE ADVENTURES #180, getting a costume in his third appearance of five. He can absorb the natural abilities of any animal within a certain distance.

15. BLACK ORCHID - The mystery super-heroine created by Sheldon Mayer; all we know of her is her super-powers (of the Kryptonian variety), her ability to disguise herself as anyone she wishes, and that she isn't Supergirl. That's obvious to anyone looking at this cover: she's taller.

16. THE ENCHANTRESS - A rather mediocre creation from STRANGE ADVENTURES #187 and two further stories, she WAS one of the few heroines in the DC stable until she was changed into some demented villainess out to get Supergirl for reasons not entirely clear. June Moon's still in Florida, though, and Linda Danvers and Supergirl are in New York, so maybe she'll go back to her heroic ways some day.

17. MAN-FISH - Nobody got this one either, and he isn't even that obscure. He ISN'T the Barracuda from those Invaders-parody issues of FREEDOM FIGHTERS issues (he would've been part of a group anyway). That guy was blue, not green, and his costume was different. Man-Fish was a 1965 addition to the cast of the SEA DEVILS comic, which in itself was a parallel of the later-created FANTASTIC FOUR in group make-up and relationships even without this obvious Namor copy. Another "Whatever Happened To...?" yet to be resolved.

18. PRINCE RA-MAN - DC's answer to Doctor Strange, though hardly as elaborate or adult in storyline or execution. See DC COMICS PRESENTS #31 for his present whereabouts.

19. THE HUMAN CANNONBALL - A rather pleasant change from the norm, Tom DeFalco created HC for the LOIS LANE strip in SUPERMAN FAMILY #188. The character (whose real name was never revealed as far as I know) was a former circus performer who simply wanted the fame of being a super-hero. Much of the inspiration seems to have been derived from Bulletman. He disappeared after #194 with DeFalco's departure from DC.

20. THE BURMA TIGER-MAN - Okay, another "cheater." The Burma Tiger-Man appeared twice, albeit with two different alter-egos. In his first appearance in MY GREATEST ADVENTURE #59, hunter Joe Jeep was given a healing potion by a hermit in Burma which gave him the Tiger-Man persona. The same thing happened later to a pair of twins, Dean and Desmond Farr, in TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED #90 (the first issue of that title I ever bought). By this rationale, he's a legitimate super-hero character, especially since I'm even more attracted to bright-orange tiger-men. (Hate Tigra, though.)

21. THE GOLDEN GUARDIAN - This isn't the original Guardian (since he's on Earth-Two), but a clone of the Earth-One version who we never got to see. He first showed up in JIMMY OLSEN #135-136 courtesy of Jack Kirby, grown to manhood in the blink of an eye, although he doesn't seem to be aging abnormally any longer. His last appearance was in SUPERMAN FAMILY #194 where he wore the costume shown here.

22. THE THORN - Robert Kanigher "revived" a character from FLASH COMICS as a heroine. Rose Forrest goes into a trance at night and dons her leather-fetish costume to do holy battle against the crime organization called the 100. Not a terribly practical costume or versatile character, nevertheless one of the few DC heroines.

23. JOSHUA - When I drew this, I figured nobody would know who he was. Now that the story has been reprinted in a high-selling digest, a lot of people know... The only Neal Adams super-hero created for DC, he appeared in 1969's TEEN TITANS #19. Maybe now

that the memory's been jogged, somebody'll bring him back...

24. AUTOMAN - In the twilight of his editorial career, Jack Schiff attempted to breathe some life into the seemingly dead-end mystery titles by introducing some adventure characters in semi-regular slots, and one of these was Automan. He appeared in TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED #91,94 and 97 and was a robot in the Adam Link tradition, solving crimes as he was hired out to clients as a detection tool. He turned out to be pretty durable, lasting long enough to make it into the 21st Century where he married Star Hawkins' robot-secretary Ilda (DC COMICS PRESENTS #33).

25. RAGMAN - The only super-hero creation of the Robert Kanigher/Joe Kubert team, Ragman is Rory Regan, who acquired superior agility, strength, etc. when his father and his circus friends were electrocuted passing their abilities to him in one of those things that could only happen in comics. His short career didn't give much indication as to how he would be used on an extensive basis, but I thought he held some promise and I liked the costume. His last appearance was in BATMAN FAMILY #20.

26. B'WANA BEAST - Poor B'wana Beast. I wonder how it feels to be the laughing stock of DC super-heroes? I suppose it was the name that done him in, though the costume and concept certainly didn't help. Yet -- I'll admit it -- I have a degree of affection for him too. And rereading it today, it doesn't appear that bad. Another of the chemically-altered super-heroes (this was the drug-laden '60s, you'll recall), Mike Maxwell, a game-preserve ranger, began his super-hero career as an animal-controlling, mind-changing jungle master after a plane crash on Kilimanjaro and a drink of spring water which gave him super-power -- enough to win an alien helmet from a super-ape guarding it, which allowed him to do such things as merge two animals into one big ugly animal to do battle with super-poachers, in the grand tradition of jungle masters everywhere. His "career" consists of stories in SHOWCASE #66 and 67.

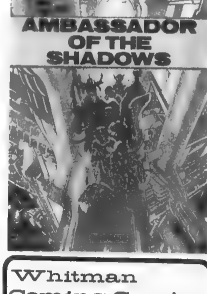
27. ASTRO - Heh-heh-heh. The other character nobody (who wasn't a member of APA-I where I had mentioned him) could identify appeared in HOUSE OF MYSTERY #140 (the first one I ever, etc.) in a story called "The Return of Astro." Bruce Mills returns to his ancestral home in the Iron Curtain country of Dolomain to find his parents' village being terrorized by a guy dressed up as the legendary wizard Count Quivius. To battle him, he costumes himself in Quivius's enemy's costume, rigging tricks to make it look as if he really is the equally-legendary Astro -- and ends up discovering that the costume really was Astro's and that it gives him his magical powers. After vanquishing Quivius, Mills thinks "As for the cloak of Astro -- with its fantastic powers -- perhaps I'd better guard it very closely from now on!" Sounds to me like they were doing a pilot story here.

Anyway, those are the 27 characters. Now for the winners:

24 correct: BEPPE SABATINI and JACK BRUCH, who missed Man-Fish, Mighty Eagle and Sandman (but who had something of an advantage, since I'd discussed Astro and the Burma Tiger-Man in APA-I, to which Beppe belonged at the time)
23 correct: ROBERT BUETHE, who missed Man-Fish, Mighty Eagle, Astro and the Burma Tiger-Man
22 correct: MICHAEL DENINGER, who missed Man-Fish, Mighty Eagle, Astro, the Burma Tiger-Man and the Assassin; and LON ROVNER, who missed Man-Fish, Mighty Eagle, Astro, Burma Tiger-Man and the Assassin
21 correct: PAT VAN WYK, who missed Man-Fish, Mighty Eagle, Astro, Burma Tiger-Man, the Assassin, and Automan; SERGIO ANDRADE, who missed Man-Fish, Mighty Eagle, Astro, Burma Tiger-Man, the Starman and Joshua; JOHN SCHWANGLER, who missed Man-Fish, Mighty Eagle, Astro, Burma Tiger-Man, Richard Dragon and Automan; and MURRAY WARD, who missed Man-Fish, Mighty Eagle, Astro, Burma Tiger-Man, Joshua and Richard Dragon. A t-shirt to all of you; there were 21 entries, which means anybody who would've entered had a good chance to win. That'll teach all you apathetic procrastinators out there! MT

European Comics

The American distributor for the English translations of the Dargaud albums of European comics has announced publication of English editions of many Dargaud comic albums formerly available only in French, and are making them available here. Besides ASTERIX, which has had titles available for some time, a number of new titles have been announced, some the first volumes of new series. New releases in English (all softcover and $3.95) include: ASTERIX IN CORSICA, ASTERIX IN BELGIUM; Lucky Luke in CALAMITY JANE; Valerian in THE AMBASSADOR OF THE SHADOWS; the Vagabond of Limbo in WHAT IS REALITY, PAPA? and THE ALCHEMIST SUPREME; Iznogoud in THE PLOTS OF THE GRAND VIZIR IZNOGOUD; Walter Melon in MAGNESIA'S TREASURE; and further titles to be announced. U.S. customers should write Press-Import (Eastern) Ltd., 20 Simmons Drive, Milford, MA 01757 or Presse-Import (Western) Ltd., c/o Americana Brokers, Sweetgrass, MT 59484; Canadians may write Presse-Import, Leo Brunelle, Inc. 490 McNicoll Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2H 2E1 or Presse-Import, Leo Brunelle Inc., 307 Benjamin-Hudon, St-Laurent, Montreal, PQ H4N-1J1. We assume ordering information will be provided.



Whitman Coming Comics

DAFFY DUCK No. 139, February. 2/3 new material. [12/10]

Walt Disney DAISY AND DONALD No. 53, February. All new. [12/10]

Walt Disney HUEY, DEWEY AND LOUIE No. 72, February. All new. [12/10]

LOONEY TUNES No. 42, February. 2/3 new. [12/10]

POPEYE THE SAILOR No. 166, February. 2/3 new. [12/10]

PORKY PIG No. 104, February. 2/3 new. [12/10]

Walt Disney SUPER GOOF No. 67, February. All new. [12/10]

TOM AND JERRY No. 339, February. All reprints. [12/10]

WOODY WOODPECKER No. 196, February. 2/3 new. [12/10]

BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY No. 14, February. All new. [12/17]

Walt Disney CHIP 'N' DALE No. 75, February. All new. [12/17]

Walt Disney's COMICS AND STORIES No. 495, February. 2/3 new. [12/17]

DOCTOR SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM No. 30, February. All new. [12/17]

Walt Disney DONALD DUCK No. 236, February. All new. [12/17]

Walt Disney MICKEY MOUSE No. 215, February. 3/4 new. [12/17]

SPACE FAMILY ROBINSON LOST IN SPACE No. 58, February. Reprints. [12/17]

Walt Disney UNCLE SCROOGE No. 193, February. All new. [12/17]

Walt Disney WINNIE-THE-POOH No. 27, February. All new. [12/17]

It's time once again for the round-up of Harvey comics not listed over the past three months:

RICHIE RICH AND HIS GIRL FRIENDS No. 12, December. [9/3]

RICHIE RICH GEMS No. 39, December. [9/3]

RICHIE RICH SUCCESS STORIES No. 101, December. [9/3]

RICHIE RICH BANK BOOKS No. 55, December. [9/24]

RICHIE RICH DOLLARS AND CENTS No. 104, December. [9/24]

RICHIE RICH GOLD AND SILVER No. 38, December. [9/24]

RICHIE RICH MILLIONS No. 109, December. [9/24]

RICHIE RICH No. 209, December. [10/1]

RICHIE RICH JACKPOTS No. 55, December. [10/1]

RICHIE RICH VAULTS OF MYSTERY No. 43, December. [10/1]

SAD SACK AND THE SARGE No. 152, December. [10/1]

RICHIE RICH AND DOLLAR THE DOG No. 21, January. [10/8]

RICHIE RICH MONEY WORLD No. 55, January. [10/8]

RICHIE RICH RICHES No. 56, January. [10/8]

RICHIE RICH AND GLORIA No. 22, January. [10/15]

RICHIE RICH BILLIONS No. 44, January. [10/15]

RICHIE RICH FORTUNES No. 60, January. [10/15]

RICHIE RICH INVENTIONS No. 22, January. [10/15]

RICHIE RICH AND CASPER No. 42, January. [10/22]

RICHIE RICH DIAMONDS No. 56, January. [10/22]

SAD SACK No. 284, January. [10/22]

RICHIE RICH No. 210, January. [10/29]

RICHIE RICH CASH No. 44, January. [10/29]

RICHIE RICH ZILLIONZ No. 30, January. [10/29]

THE FRIENDLY GHOST, CASPER No. 220, February. [11/5]

RICHIE RICH AND JACKIE JOKERS No. 46, February. [11/5]

RICHIE RICH PROFITS No. 44, February. [11/5]

RICHIE RICH AND CADBURY, THE PERFECT BUTLER No. 21, February. [11/12]

RICHIE RICH GEMS No. 40, February. [11/12]

RICHIE RICH SUCCESS STORIES No. 102, February. [11/12]

RICHIE RICH AND HIS GIRL FRIENDS No. 13, February. [11/19]

RICHIE RICH BANK BOOKS No. 56, February. [11/19]

RICHIE RICH DOLLARS AND CENTS No. 105, February. [11/19]

RICHIE RICH No. 211, February. [11/26]

RICHIE RICH VAULTS OF MYSTERY No. 44, February. [11/26]

SAD SACK AND THE SARGE No. 153, February. [11/26]

TIME BANDITS No. 1, February. "Time Bandits" is by Steve Parkhouse, David Lloyd and John Stokes. The movie adaptation of the film done by Terry Gilliam with Michael Palin caught everybody by surprise it appears, as we weren't even aware that the movie was to be issued in November, much less the comic. Ed Hannigan and Al Milgrom did the cover. [11/17]

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DAREDEVIL No. 180, March. "The Damned" is by Frank Miller and Klaus Janson. In a terrifying world beneath the streets of New York, filled with alligators and mutants, DD finds Kingpin's wife Vanessa. Miller and Janson did the cover. [11/24]

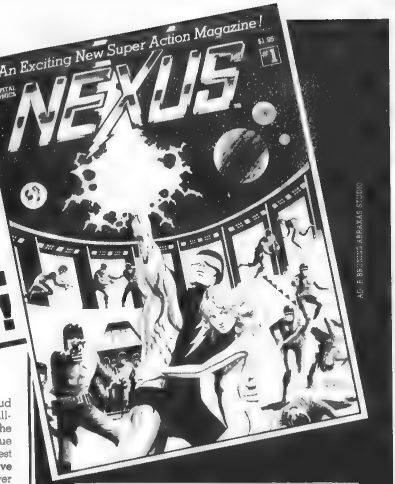
DAZZLER No. 13, March. "Trial and Terror" is by Danny Fingeroth, Frank Springer and Vince Colletta. Trapped on Ryker's prison isle, Dazzler must contend with four female inmates called the Grapplers. Dave Cockrum did the cover. [11/24]

DENNIS THE MENACE No. 5, March. [11/24]

*GIANT SILVER SURFER No. 1, March. "Escape to Terror" is by Stan Lee, John Byrne and Tom Palmer. This 48-page,

FIRST ISSUE!!!

COVER BY PAUL GULACY!



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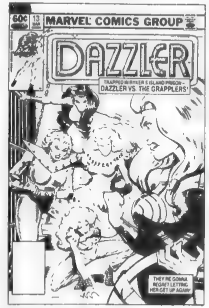
$1.00 one-shot features the return of Norrin Radd to Zenn-La. Byrne and Palmer did the cover. [11/24]

*KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE No. 12, March. "Belasco" is by Bruce Jones, Brent Anderson and Armando Gil. The battle with Belasco and the Legions of Hades continues. Also, "Tales of Zabu" by Bruce Jones and Gil Kane. Anderson did the cover. [11/24]



KING CONAN No. 9, March. "Bone of the Brown Man" is by Doug Moench, John Buscema and Ernie Chan. Conan and Conn try to make peace with the Picts and instead discover the secret of the Brown Man's bone. Buscema did the cover. [11/24]

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 85, March. "The Final Fate of Giant-Man" is by Tom DeFalco, Ron Wilson and Chic Stone. The Thing teams up with Spider-Woman to save Giant-Man's life. Ron Wilson and Chic Stone did the cover. [11/24]

SPIDEY SUPER STORIES No. 57,

March. Thousands will be mourning in the streets as we bid a fond adieu to SSS, now an ex-comic book. The covers are by Al Milgrom and Jack Abel (front) and Jack Abel and Al Milgrom (back). [11/24]

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 226, March. "But the Cat Came Back" is by Roger Stern, John Romita Jr. and Jim Mooney. The Black Cat's back and packing no fat as she kicks Spidey in the slats 'cause he packs no gats. (Ack!) Also: Jean DeWolff returns. John Romita Jr. and Al Milgrom did the cover. [12/1]

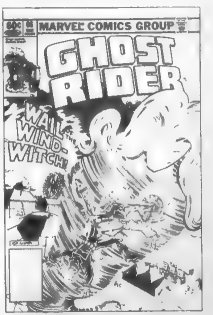
CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 267, March. "The Man Who Made a Difference" is by J. Marc De Matteis, Mike Zeck and John Beatty. After a high-schooler tries to kill him, Cap re-examines his role as hero, whilst the mysterious Everyman lurks in the background. Zeck did the cover (and colored it too). [12/1]

CRAZY MAGAZINE No. 83, February. Besides regular features, the parody is "Raiders of the Lost Ark" by Paul Kupperberg and Bob Camp, and "A, B, C Demise" by Ralph Reese. Bob Larkin did the cover. [12/1]

GHOST RIDER No. 66, March. "The Witch In the Whirlwind" is by Michael Fleisher and Tom Sutton. The Quintin Carnival is haunted by a ghost from Johnny's past. Bob Layton did the cover. [12/1]

*MICRONAUTS No. 39, March. "Starting Over" is by Bill Mantlo, Steve Ditko and Danny Bulanadi. It's only right — the book is only sold through direct sales, so the Micronauts invade a comic book shop! They also fight a bunch of crazed Acroyears on a construction site. Mike Golden did the cover. [12/1]

*MOON KNIGHT No. 17, March. "The Master-Sniper's Legacy" is by Doug Moench and Bill Sienkiewicz. Another madman stalks Chicago. Sien-



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kiewicz did the cover. [12/1]

THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 73, February. "The Changling Quest" is by Michael Fleisher and John Buscema. A shape-shifter from another dimension wants to take Conan's place. Also, Valeria stars in "Island of Pirate Doom" by Roy Thomas, Buscema and Danny Bulanadi. Pablo Marcos contributed a pin-up. Joe Juska did the cover. [12/1]

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THOR No. 317, March. "Chaos at Canaveral" is by Doug Moench, Keith Pollard and Chic Stone, among others. When Man-Beast doth hijack a space shuttle with a female astronaut aboard, doth not the mighty Thor protect her? Sure he doth. Pollard did the cover. [12/1]

THE AVENGERS No. 217, March. "Double Cross" is by Jim Shooter, Bob Hall and Dan Green. Hank Pym's sunk so low that he allows Egghead to blackmail him into battling the Avengers as Yellowjacket. A shock-ending is

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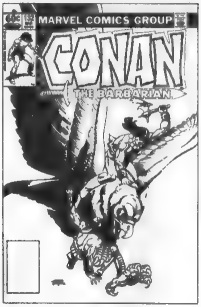
promised. Hall and Green did the cover. [12/8]



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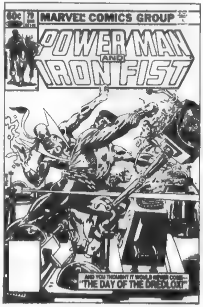
CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 132, March. "The Games of Gham" is by Bruce Jones, Gil Kane and Danny Bulanadi. Conan competes in a contest of warriors. Kane did the cover. [12/8]

THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 269, March. "Enter the Hulk Hunters" is by Bill Mantlo and Sal Buscema. Hulk is pursued by the Hulk Hunters: Dark Crawler, Jorgo and the Amphibion. And why does Rick Jones subject himself to Gamma Rays? Al Milgrom did the cover. [12/8]

*MARVEL FANFARE No. 1, March. "Fast Descent Into Hell" is by Chris Claremont and Michael Golden. An experimental, $1.25 comic printed entirely on cover-stock, this first issue features a Spider-Man team-up with the Angel as they enter the Savage Land. The back-up story is "Snow" by Roger McKenzie, Paul Smith and Terry Austin and stars Daredevil. Golden did the front cover, and Frank Miller did the back. [12/8]

MARVEL TALES STARRING SPIDER-MAN No. 137, March. "Spider-Man" is the origin and first Spider-Man tale reprinted in its entirety of eleven pages from AMAZING FANTASY #15. Also included is the original cover to that



issue which wasn't used. Plus, Dr. Strange in "The Origin of Dr. Strange" by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko (as is the Spider-Man story). Mathematicians should be able to figure out that something else must be included to fill the issue. Jack Kirby and Ditko did the cover. [12/8]

POWER MAN AND IRON FIST No. 79, March. "Day of the Dreadlox" is by Jo Duffy, Kerry Gammill and Ricardo Villamonte. Bob Diamond's alien invasion play becomes reality, and only Danny and Luke can stop things. Al

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Milgrom did the cover. [12/8]

ROM No. 28, March. "Earthward Bound" is by Bill Mantlo, Sal Buscema and Joe Sinnott. When Rom and Starshine get back from Galador, they find Clairton leaving -- against its will. Al Milgrom did the cover. [12/8]

THE UNCANNY X-MEN No. 155, March. "Reunion" is by Chris Claremont, Dave Cockrum and Bob Wiacek. The kidnapped Lilandra is sought even while Shi'ar assassins stalk the X-Men. Cockrum and Wiacek did the cover. [12/8]

EPIC ILLUSTRATED No. 10, April. The issue includes "Marada the She-Wolf" by Chris Claremont and John Bolton; "Children of the Stars" by Charles Vess (final chapter); "Bird" by Stedroy Cleghorn; "Dr. Watchstop Faces the Future" by Ken Macklin; "Abraxas and the Earthman" Chapter One by Rick Veitch. [12/10]

THE DEFENDERS No. 105, March. "Rising" is by J. Marc De Matteis, Don Perlin and Joe Sinnott. If the Beast doesn't solve the mystery of the Resurrection Stone, his true love may be forever lost to him. Also, Son of Satan returns with new duties in Hell. Mr. Fantastic guest-stars. Al Milgrom did the cover. [12/15]

FANTASTIC FOUR No. 240, March. "Exodus" is by John Byrne. It's on to the Hidden Land, the Inhumans, Medusa's fate, and the birth of a child to Quicksilver and Crystal. Byrne and Austin did the cover. [12/15]

*THE FANTASTIC FOUR ROAST No. 1, March. "When Titans Roast" is by Fred Hembeck, Mike Golden, Frank Miller, John Byrne, Brent Anderson, Terry Austin, etc., etc. In celebration of the 20th anniversary of FANTASTIC FOUR #1, the entire Marvel universe is put up to public ridicule by somebody who shouldn't be throwing stones. Fred Hembeck did the story and layouts with each character's regular artist contributing finished art on that character. The cover is a similar jam session. [12/15]

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IRON MAN No. 156, March. "The Mauler Mandate" is by David Michelinie, John Romita Jr. and Dan Green. Daredevil's foe the Mauler takes on Iron Man suited with new, more destructive armor. Also: details of Rhodey's rotten past. Romita Jr. and Bob Layton did the cover. [12/15]

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MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 115, March. "Between Sword and Hammer" is by J. Marc De Matteis, Herb Trimpe and Mike Esposito. When the enchanted sword of Valkyrie, Dragonfang, is possessed by the Mind-Bender, it commands her to battle Spider-Man and Thor. Bob Layton did the cover. [12/15]

MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 110, March. "Perilous Reign" is by Doug Moench, Gene Day and Armando Gil. It's Shang-Chi and Leiko against a free-lance martial artist. Day did the cover. [12/15]

PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 64, March. "Cloak and Dagger" is by Bill Mantlo and Al Milgrom. The story title is named after the eponymous villains, a man and woman. Ed Hannigan and Al Milgrom did the cover. [12/15]

STAR WARS No. 57, March. "Hello Besbin Goodbye" is by David Michelinie, Walt Simonson and Tom Palmer. Lando tries to prevent the Empire and the residents from destroying Cloud City. Simonson did the cover. [12/15]

DC Coming C...os

ARAK/SON OF THUNDER No. 7, March. "A Dark, Unlighted Place" is by Roy Thomas, Ernie Colon and Tony DeZuniga. Arak and friends celebrate Christmas in a most unusual manner. Colon did the cover. [12/3]

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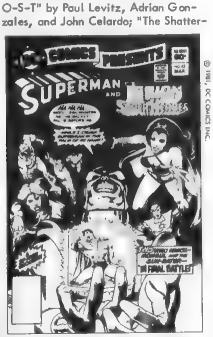
THE BEST OF DC No. 22, March. CHRISTMAS WITH THE SURER-HEROES is the theme, and besides these reprints: "A Swingin' Christmas Carol" by Bob Haney and Nick Cardy (TEEN TITANS #16), "Merry Christmas" by Denny O'Neil, Irv Novick and Dick Giordano (BATMAN #247), "Freddy Freeman's Christmas" by Bud Thompson (CAPTAIN MARVEL JR. #46), "A Christmas Peril" by Bob Kane and Jerry Robinson (BATMAN #27), "Robin's (Very) White Christmas" by Bob Rozakis, Jose Delbo and Vince Colletta (BATMAN FAMILY #4), and "The Man Who Murdered Santa Claus" by Len Wein, Dick Dillin and Dick Giordano (JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #110); there's one never-before-published story: "The Seal Men's War On Santa Claus" by Jack Kirby

and Mike Royer, an unused SANDMAN story from 1976. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/3]

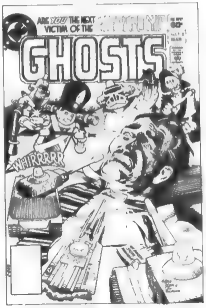
DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 43, March. "In Final Battle" is by Paul Levitz, Curt Swan and Dave Hunt. Superman and the Legion of Super-Heroes take on those two cuddly guys, Mongul and the Sun-Eater. It's a book-lengther. Brian Bolland did the cover. [12/3]

DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST No. 19, March. THE DOOM PATROL are resurrected for the purposes of an all-reprint digest, and stories include: "The Brotherhood of Evil" from DP #86, "Mento, The Man Who Split the Doom Patrol" from DP #91, "The Enemy Within the Doom Patrol" from DP #90, all by Arnold Drake and Bruno Premiani, plus "The Doom Patrol" from MY GREATEST ADVENTURE #80, the team's origin story by Drake and Bob Haney and Bruno Premiani. George Perez and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [12/3]

GHOSTS No. 110, March. In this issue: "The Game of Electronic G-H-O-S-T" by Paul Levitz, Adrian Gonzales, and John Celardo; "The Shatter-



ing Secret of Squire Shade" by Robin Snyder, Howard Bender and Tex Blaisdell; "Network of Vengeance" by Bill Kelley and Angel Trinidad; and "The Double" by Kelley, Paris Cullins and Mike DeCarlo. Ernie Colon and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/3]



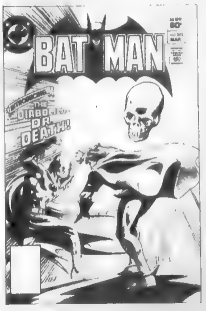
JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 200, March. The triumphal 200th anniversary of the longest-lived super-hero team is celebrated with a 72-page issue and a 67-page story entitled "A League Divided" by Gerry Conway, with art by: George Perez and Brett Breeding (thirty-page framing sequence); Pat Broderick and Terry Austin (Firestorm and J'onn J'onzz); Brian Bolland (Batman, Green Arrow and Black Canary); Joe Kubert (Superman and Hawkman); Dick Giordano (Wonder Woman and Zatanna); Carmine Infantino and Frank Giacoia (The Flash, Elongated Man and Adam Strange); Gil Kane (Green Lantern and the Atom); and Jim Aparo (Aquaman, Red Tornado and the Phantom Stranger). Perez did the cover. $1.50. [12/3]

WEIRD WAR TALES No. 109, March.

The Creature Commandos lead things off with "The Beast Within Us, Part One" by Robert Kanigher and Dan Spiegle. The War That Time Forgot is represented by "The Diary Of...?" by Kanigher and Bob Hall. Other stories include "No Time For Peace" by George Kashdan and Rudy Zamora, and "Silent Is The Grave" by Kanigher, Ron Randall and Gerry Talaoc. Rich Buckler and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [12/3]

WONDER WOMAN No. 289, March. "His Name Is Psycho" is by Roy Thomas, Gene Colan and Romeo Tanghal. Dr. Psycho, a deranged criminal genius, creates WW's male counterpart: Captain Wonder. Also, the Huntress appears in "Walls of Stone, Chains of Steel" by Paul Levitz, Joe Staton, and Bruce Patterson, in combat with the Crime Lord. Colan and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/3]

BATMAN No. 345, March. "Calling Dr. Death" is by Roy Thomas, Gene Colan and Klaus Janson. Dr. Death returns from 1939 to do battle with Batman in a story continued in this month's



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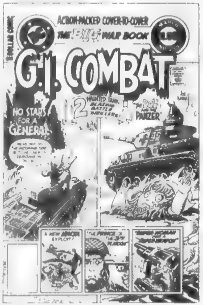
DETECTIVE. Then Catwoman begins her own strip with "Terror Train" by Bruce Jones, Trevor Von Eeden and Pablo Marcos. Gene Colan and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/10]

THE FLASH No. 307, March. "Prey For The Piper" is by Cary Bates, Carmine Infantino and Bob Smith. The Pied Piper turns Flash into living sound as his heretofore unknown origin is finally revealed. Plus, Dr. Fate stars in "Dawn of the Fifth Sun" by Martin Pasko, Keith Giffen and Larry Mahlstedt. Carmine Infantino and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/10]



G.I. COMBAT No. 239, March. The Haunted Tank's tales: "No Stars For A General" and "The Doll and the Panzer" by Robert Kanigher, Sam Glanzman and Dick Ayers. The O.S.S. story is "The Executioner" by Kanigher and E.R. Cruz, and the Women at War feature is "Super-Woman For a Super-Weapon" by Kanigher and Cruz. Also: "Prince of the Third Platoon" by Arnold Drake and Joe Matucenio. Joe Kubert did the cover. [12/10]

JONAH HEX No. 58, March. "The Treasure of Catfish Pond" is by Michael Fleisher, Dick Ayers and Tony DeZuniga. Jonah hides a dog for some reason and a large fellow wants him back, with a treasure at the bottom of things. Also, El Diablo makes his mysterious return in "The Night of the Dark Destroyer" by Gary Cohn, Dick Ayers and Tony DeZuniga. DeZuniga did the cover. [12/10]

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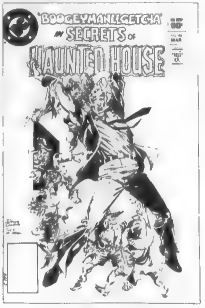
THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 17, March. "The Possession of Francis Kane" is by Marv Wolfman, George Perez and Romeo Tanghal. A super-villain is at the bottom of the possession of a young girl by demons. Perez and Tanghal did the cover. [12/10]

SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE No. 46, March. The secrets will have to remain so, as this is the final issue, and these are the last to be revealed: "Boogieman'll-getcha" by Stan Timmons and Fred Carrillo; "Here Comes Christmas" by Robin



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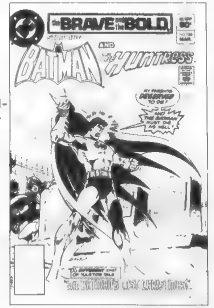
Snyder, Howard Bender and Tex Blaisdell; "You May Already Have One" by Greg LaRocque and Larry Mahlstedt; "Murder Mirror" by Tom Sciacca and Ric Estrada; "Seeker" by Steve Bissette; and "Young At Heart" by Paul Kupperberg and Vic Catan Jr. Denys Cowan and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/10]

SUPERMAN No. 369, March. "Superman's Last Christmas" is by Cary Bates, Rich Buckler and Frank McLaughlin. Superman may never see another yule if The Parasite has anything to say about it. Buckler and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [12/10]



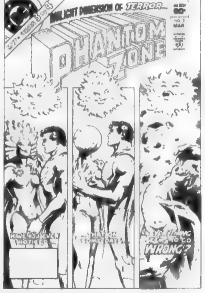
THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 184, March. "The Batman's Last Christmas" is by Mike W. Barr and Jim Aparo. Last Christmases seem to be going around as Batman teams up with his "daughter," The Huntress. Also: Nemesis stars in "Outfoxed" by Cary Burkett and Dan Spiegle. Aparo did the cover. [12/17]

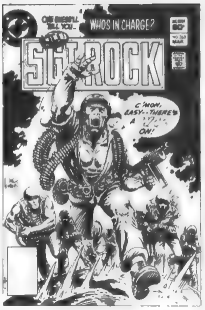
GREEN LANTERN No. 150, March. The 150th anniversary issue is a $1.00

48-pager and features "From Qward With Hate" by Marv Wolfman, Joe Staton and Dan DeCarlo. The Anti-Green Lantern Corps takes GL to Qward where he's put in command and told to lead the Corps against the rest of the GL Corps. Plus, "Meanwhile..." is a GL backup without GL, featuring Carol Ferris, Pie, and the other supporting characters. Staton and DeCarlo did the cover. [12/17]

HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 302, March. The issue leads off with an I, VAMPIRE story, "Blood Ties" by Bruce Jones and Tom Sutton. Other stories are "The Serpent Tree" by Jack C. Harris and Frank Redondo and "Benny's Friend" by Jones and Dan Spiegle. Michael Kaluta did the cover. [12/17]

THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 285, March. "Night Never Falls At Nullport" is by Paul Levitz, Pat Broderick and Bruce Patterson. Also, a Dream Girl solo story: "The Forgotten Future" by Levitz, Keith Giffen and Patterson. Broderick and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [12/17]



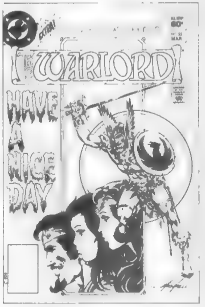


THE PHANTOM ZONE No. 3, March. "The Terror Beyond Twilight" is by Steve Gerber, Gene Colan and Tony DeZuniga. The story continues with guest-stars Supergirl, Batman, Green Lantern and others. Colan and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/17]

SGT. ROCK No. 362, March. "Who's In Charge?" is by Robert Kanigher and Frank Redondo. Non-Rock stories include "The Sacrifice" by Jan Duursema, "Battleground" by Kanigher and Tom Mandrake, and "My Brother's Keeper" by Creamer. Joe Kubert did the cover. [12/17]

THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 216, March. Supergirl stars in "Victory is Only 500 Centuries Away" by Martin Pasko, Winslow Mortimer and Vince Colletta; Mr. and Mrs. Superman star in "Who's Superman?" by E. Nelson Bridwell, Kurt Schaffenberger and Frank Chiaramonte; Superbaby's back in "Santa's Super Assistant" by Cary Bates

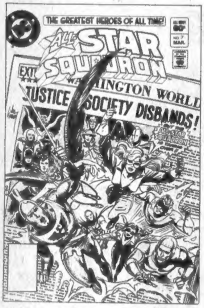
John Calnan and Dave Hunt; Lois Lane stars in "Reporters Are Not Born" by Tamsyn O'Flynn, Bob Oksner and Colletta; and Jimmy Olsen solos in "The Comic Strip Avenger" by Paul Kupperberg, Jose Delbo and Colletta. Oksner and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/17]



THE WARLORD No. 55, March. "Have a Nice Day" is by Mike Grell, Mark Texiera and Mike DeCarlo. Travis employs an unusual method of warfare. Then, ARION, LORD OF ATLANTIS takes over the backup slot with "Atlantis" by Paul Kupperberg and Jan Duursema. Mike Grell did the cover. [12/17]

ACTION COMICS No. 529, March. "I Have Two Eyes, But I Cannot See" is by Marv Wolfman, Curt Swan and Dan Adkins. Brainiac's team-up with Superman is a plot to destroy Earth. Then Aquaman stars in "Death If By Land, Death If By Sea" by Bob Rozakis, Alex Saviuk and Joe Giella. George Perez and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/24]

ALL-STAR SQUADRON No. 7, March. "Carnage For Christmas" is by Roy Thomas, Adrian Gonzales and Jerry Ordway. Baron Blitzkrieg plans to assassinate Churchill and Roosevelt, while another super-hero is added to the cast. Joe Kubert did the cover. [12/24]



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CAPTAIN CARROTT AND HIS AMAZING ZOO CREW No. 1, March. "The Pluto Syndrome" is by Roy Thomas, Scott Shaw and Bob Smith, with Ross Andru pencilling Superman. The Zoo Crew is introduced as Superman aids them in battling Starro the Conqueror in the funny-animal universe. Scott, Andru and Smith did the cover. [12/24]

DETECTIVE COMICS No. 512, March. "The Fatal Prescription of Dr. Death" is by Roy Thomas, Gene Colan and Klaus Janson. Continuing from this month's BATMAN, Dr. Death continues to plague Batman in an issue billed as the 45th anniversary special. Batgirl also appears in "The Riders In The Night" by Cary Burkett, Jose Delbo

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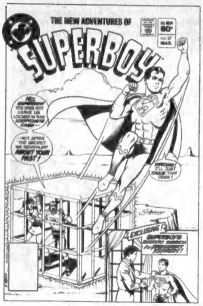

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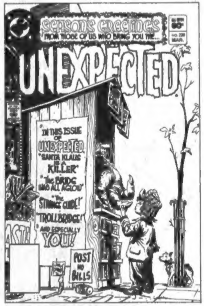
and Joe Giella. Gene Colan and Dick Giordano did the cover. [12/24]

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 27, March. "The Secret That Time Forgot to Tell" is by Cary Bates, Kurt Schaffenberger and Dave Hunt. Was Superboy adopted on Krypton as he was on Earth? While you're wondering, the other story in the issue is "Superboy's Mystery Mission" by Bob Rozakis, Jose Delbo and Dennis Jensen. Kurt Schaffenberger did the cover. [12/24]



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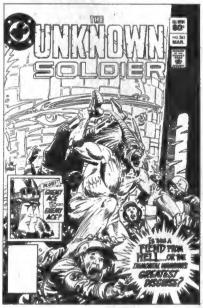
THE UNEXPECTED No. 220, March. In this issue" "Santa Claus Was a Killer" by Robin Snyder and Ernie Colon; "The Bride Was All Aglow" by Arnold Drake and Vic Catan; "The Strange Guide" by Bill Kelley and Catan; and "Trollbridge" by Dan Mishkin, Gary Cohn and Paris Cullins. Joe Kubert did the cover. [12/24]

UNKNOWN SOLDIER No. 261, March. "The Hour of the Beast" is by Bob Haney, Dick Ayers and Gerry Talaoc. Lady Jade guest-stars as the Unknown Soldier enters the realm of the supernatural as he faces a demon. Enemy Ace continues with part two of "Death of a Double" by Robert Kanigher and John Severin. Also included: "They Rode to the Sounds of the Guns" by Bob Haney and Ric Estrada. Joe Kubert did the cover. [12/24]



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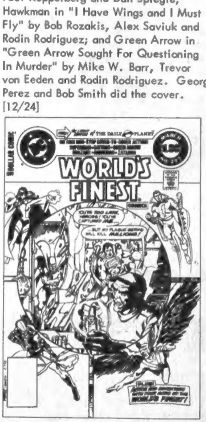
WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No. 277, March. "Beasts of Plague" is by Cary Burkett, Don Heck and Romeo Tanghal. Superman and Batman attempt to prevent the unleashing of a beast-creating plague. Plus: Captain Marvel Jr. in "Menace of the Moon-Tree" by E. Nelson Bridwell, Don Newton and Dan Adkins; Zatanna in "Doppleganger" by Paul Kupperberg and Dan Spiegle; Hawkman in "I Have Wings and I Must Fly" by Bob Rozakis, Alex Saviuk and Rodin Rodriguez; and Green Arrow in "Green Arrow Sought For Questioning In Murder" by Mike W. Barr, Trevor von Eeden and Rodin Rodriguez. George Perez and Bob Smith did the cover. [12/24]



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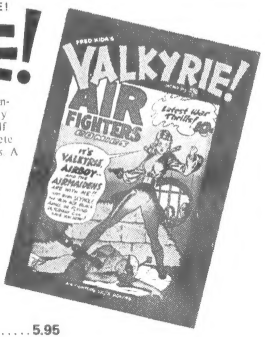

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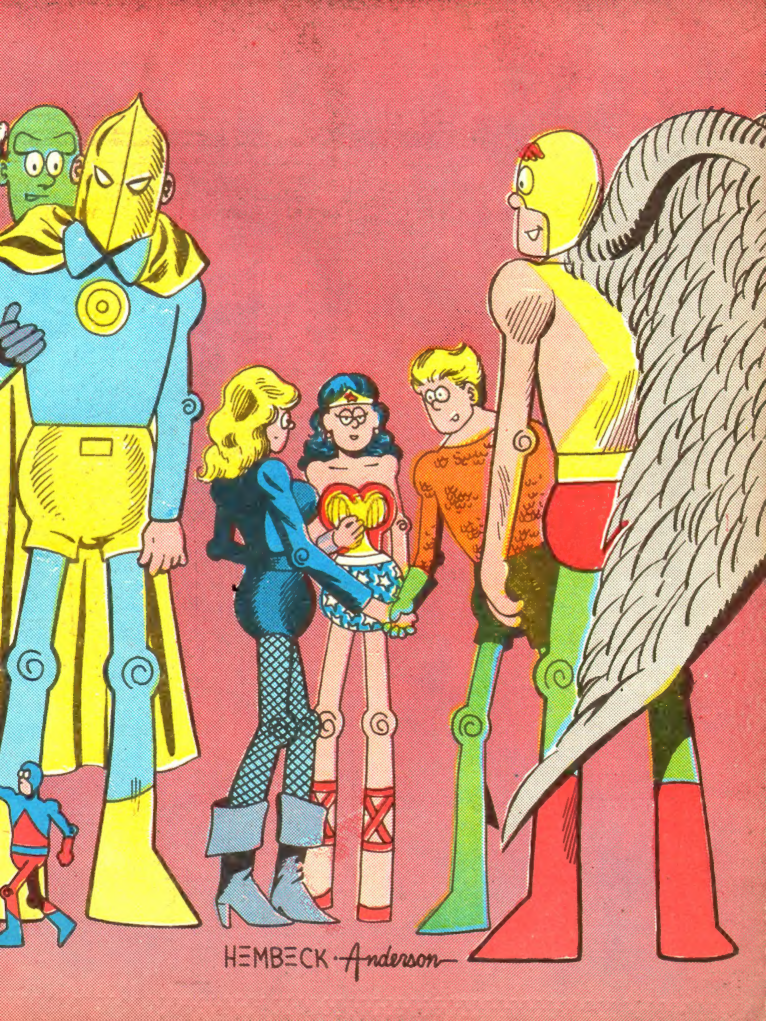
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